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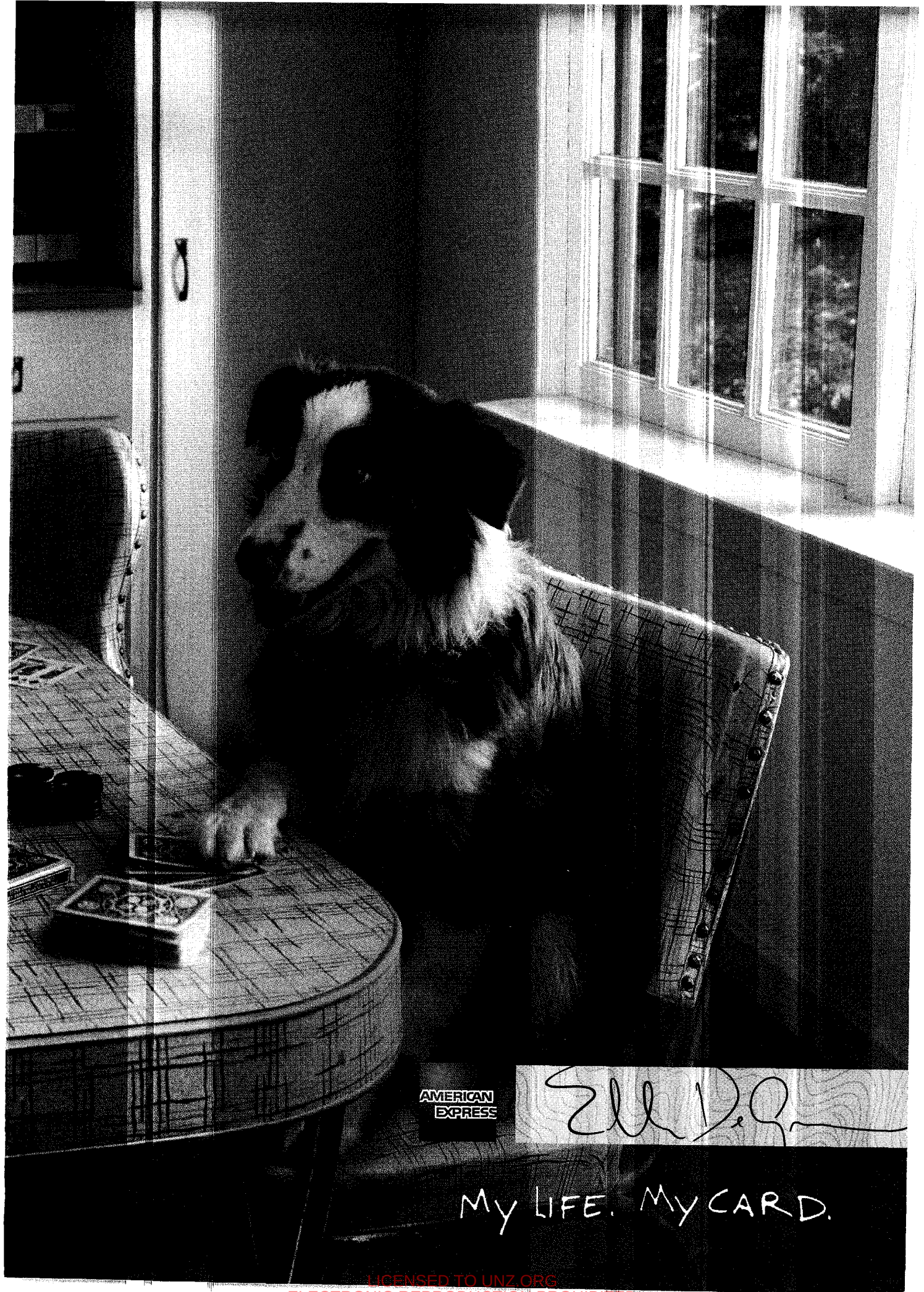
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THE NEW YORKER



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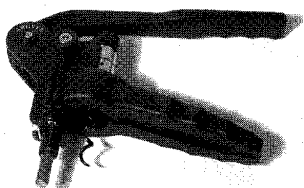
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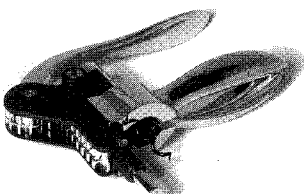
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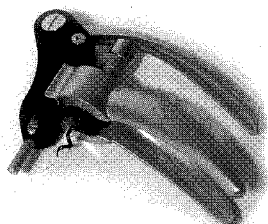
Bob Jula, Pittsburgh, Pa.



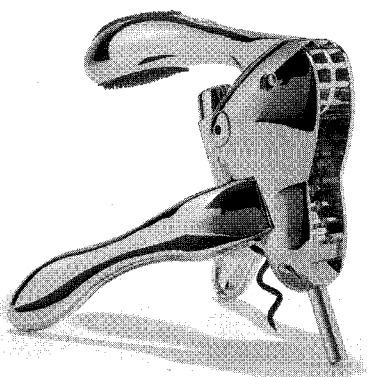
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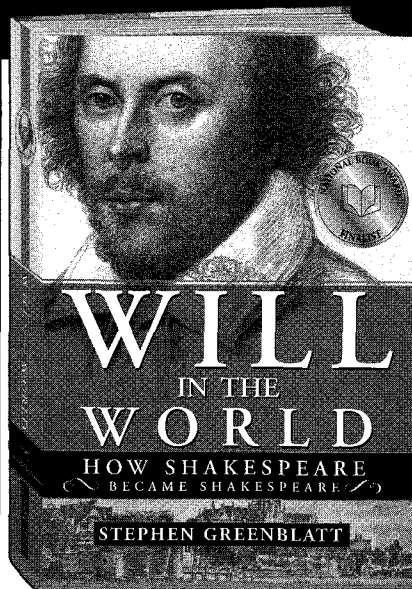
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CONTRIBUTORS

David Grann ("Mysterious Circumstances," p. 58) is a staff writer.

Andrey Slivka ("Orange Alert," p. 42) is the editor-in-chief of the *Kiev Post*, in Ukraine.

Woody Allen (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 50) has been a contributor to the magazine for many years.

Nick Paumgarten (The Talk of the Town, p. 39) is an editor at the magazine.

James Surowiecki (The Financial Page, p. 40) is the author of "The Wisdom of Crowds," which was published in May.

Judith Thurman ("Curiosity Shopping," p. 52) received this year's Harold D. Vursell Memorial Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

George Booth (Cover) has published six collections of cartoons, including "Booth Again!" and "The Essential George Booth," edited by Lee Lorenz. He has been contributing to the magazine since 1969.

Malcolm Gladwell ("The Picture Problem," p. 74) has a new book, "Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking," coming out next month.

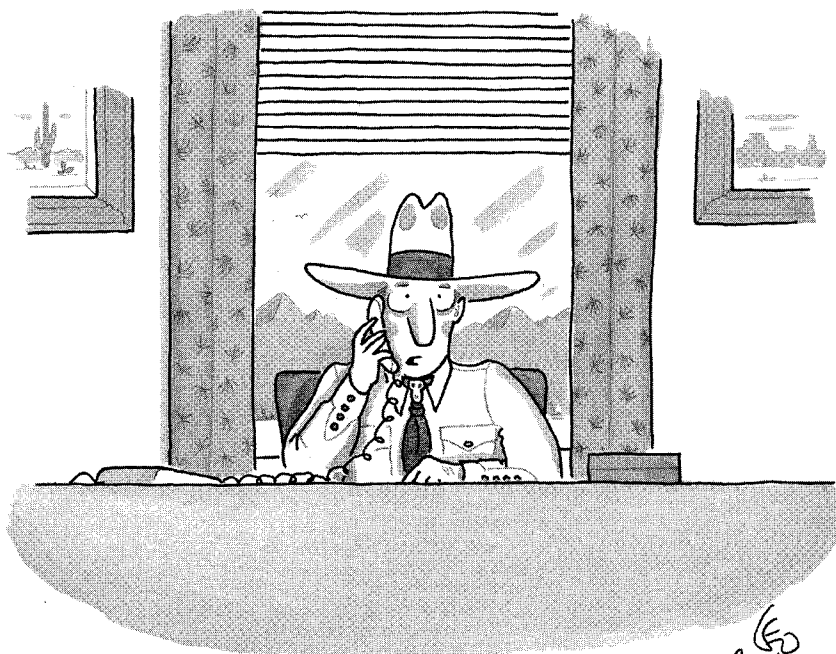
John Ashbery (Poem, p. 63) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet. "Selected Prose," a collection of his writings from 1953 to 2003, came out last month, and a new collection of poems, "Where Shall I Wander," comes out in March.

Martin Schoeller (Portfolio, p. 82) will have an exhibition of his work at the Camera Works gallery in Berlin, next April, to coincide with the publication of a book of his portraits.

Louise Erdrich (Fiction, p. 84) is the author of ten novels, including "The Master Butchers Singing Club" and "Four Souls."

Joan Acocella (Books, p. 92) reviews books and dance for the magazine.

John Lahr (The Theatre, p. 105), the magazine's senior drama critic, is writing a biography of Tennessee Williams. ♦



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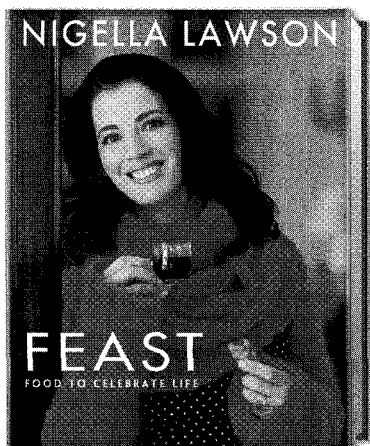
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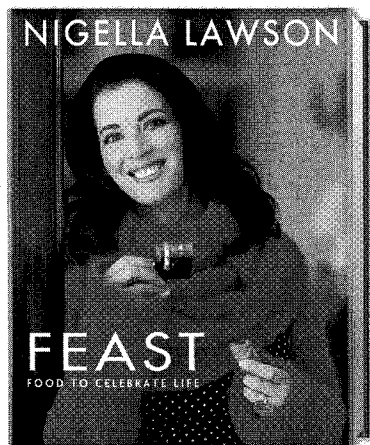
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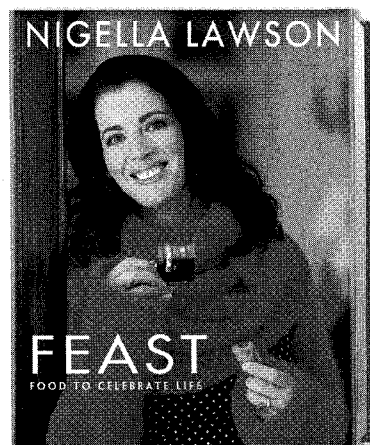
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THE MAIL

VEILED THREATS

Having fairly recently returned from a job as a professor in Istanbul, I was interested by Jane Kramer's analysis of the French ban on religious veils in schools ("Taking the Veil," November 22nd). Veiling was common among the Muslim college students I taught. I found that the practice symbolized different things for them. In part, it was a way of asserting a non-Western identity, but often more general teen-age concerns—independence and group identity—seemed equally important. And pressure to wear the veil didn't always come from within the family; it was noticeable that many mothers of veiled students did not wear veils themselves. For this reason, the culturally distinctive practice had for me the paradoxical effect of underscoring a child-parent dynamic that would be recognizable to parents anywhere.

*Kiki Kennedy-Day
New York City*

The French should be applauded for their stand against religious garb in public schools. Although from a multiculturalist standpoint the policy seems open to criticism, it is the domestic issue of childhood freedom that is being protected. It is critical to remember that this law applies only to young people who have not reached the age of majority. The aim is not to limit the freedoms of adult individuals or to indoctrinate students against their inherited customs. It is, rather, to give them the ability to choose their own path as they negotiate the conflicts of a mixed cultural heritage.

*Victoria Loeb Ziss
Merion Station, Pa.*

WEBER'S WORLD

Elizabeth Kolbert deftly explores Max Weber's remarkable insights regarding the aimlessness of work in modern capitalist society (Books, November 29th). Meanwhile, the implications of his ideas for our understanding of "human na-

ture" are, if anything, even more provocative. Weber's celebrated analysis of "the Protestant ethic" challenges the modern assumption that people are inherently acquisitive. The notion that all human beings naturally seek to accumulate more wealth if given the chance—which is taken for granted in economic analysis—was for Weber a specific historical product of the Reformation. The "iron cage" of accumulation, as he termed it, was not fundamental to human nature but resulted from an excessive "care for external goods" that threatened to subvert all other human values and codes.

*Michael A. Bernstein
Professor of History
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, Calif.*

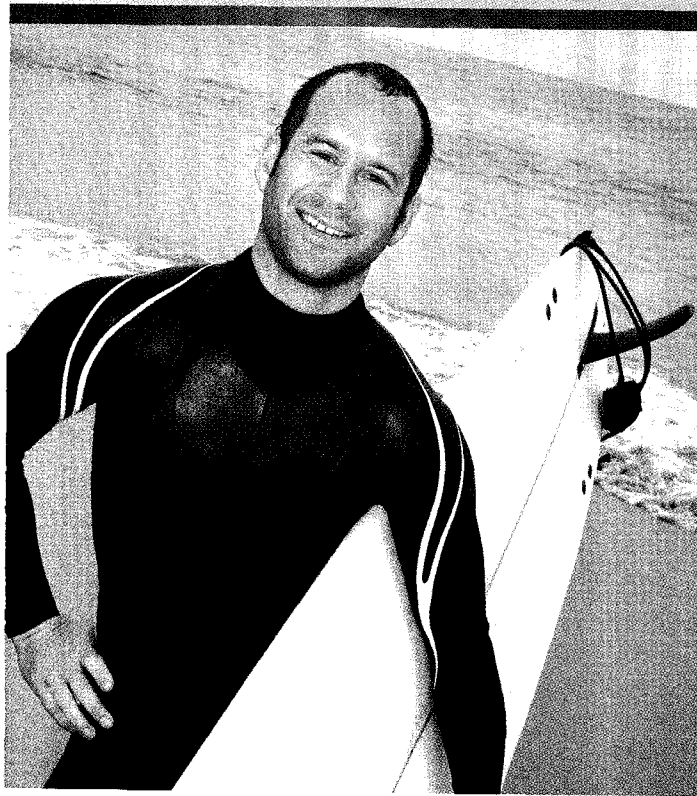
It was illuminating to read Kolbert's essay on Max Weber so soon after Jon Lee Anderson's examination of the Bush Administration's refusal to allow Baath Party members to return to their government jobs ("Out on the Street," November 15th). Weber would have readily understood that those bureaucrats are, as the people responsible for Iraq's day-to-day functioning, the glue that holds their society together. He wrote, "A rationally structured system of bureaucrats will continue to function flawlessly, even if an enemy occupies the territory in question, as long as the invader merely changes the top officials. It continues to function due to the fact that it is in the vital interest of all involved, including, above all, that of the enemy." Small wonder that Weber's ideas have remained so influential for so long. If only the Bush Administration had read him.

*Rik Scarce
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.*

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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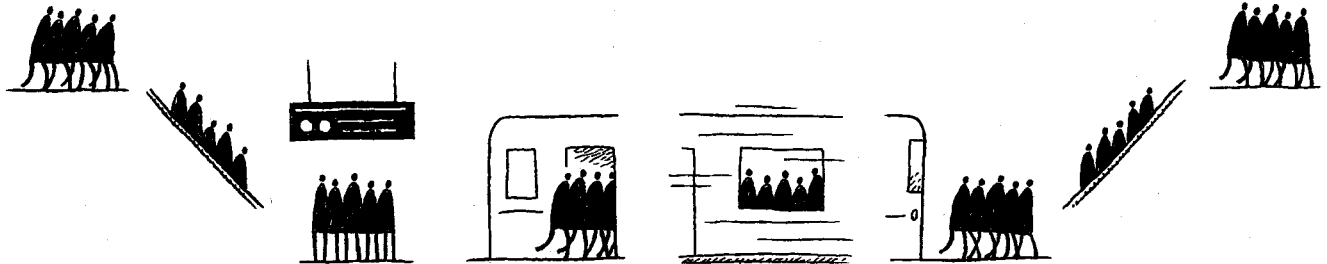


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THIS WEEK A NEW PHAEDRA

The New York Philharmonic is finally taking notice of the mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, whom the rest of the music world has adored for the last decade. Her rich debut vehicle, Britten's solo cantata "Phaedra," should help to make up for lost time. A searing setting of Racine's poem (in the Robert Lowell translation) about the ancient queen's suicidal lust for her stepson, it unites Hunt Lieberson's two compelling personae—the fearless

modern-music advocate and the impassioned Romantic diva. She gives the first of four performances on Tuesday, with Colin Davis conducting. (Avery Fisher Hall, Dec. 14; see Classical Music.)

TIME OF THE SEASON

The holidays are a time for bringing people together, and for the past few years the Hoboken trio Yo La Tengo—the guitarist Ira Kaplan, the drummer Georgia Hubley (who is also Kaplan's wife), and the bassist James McNew—have done exactly that with a run of Hanukkah shows at the local rock-and-roll club Maxwell's. As usual, other bands will join Yo La Tengo onstage; this year's guests include the Shams, Eleventh Dream Day, and the Coctails. (Dec. 7-14; see Night Life.)

WEARING NATURE

Clothing might separate us from the animals, but fashion, in the form of coats, hats, and even more exotic accoutrements, has the power to bring man and beast together again. "Wild: Fashion Untamed" opens at the Met on Dec. 7 with more than a hundred examples of clothing and accessories derived from or inspired by animals. PETA-friendly faux-fur items will stand next to beaver coats favored by would-be moguls in the early twentieth century, Victorian hats decorated with taxidermy, and avant-garde couture items inspired by birds and foxes. A peacock-feather cape designed by Edith Head will be here, too, and Catwoman's leather bodysuit. (See Art.)

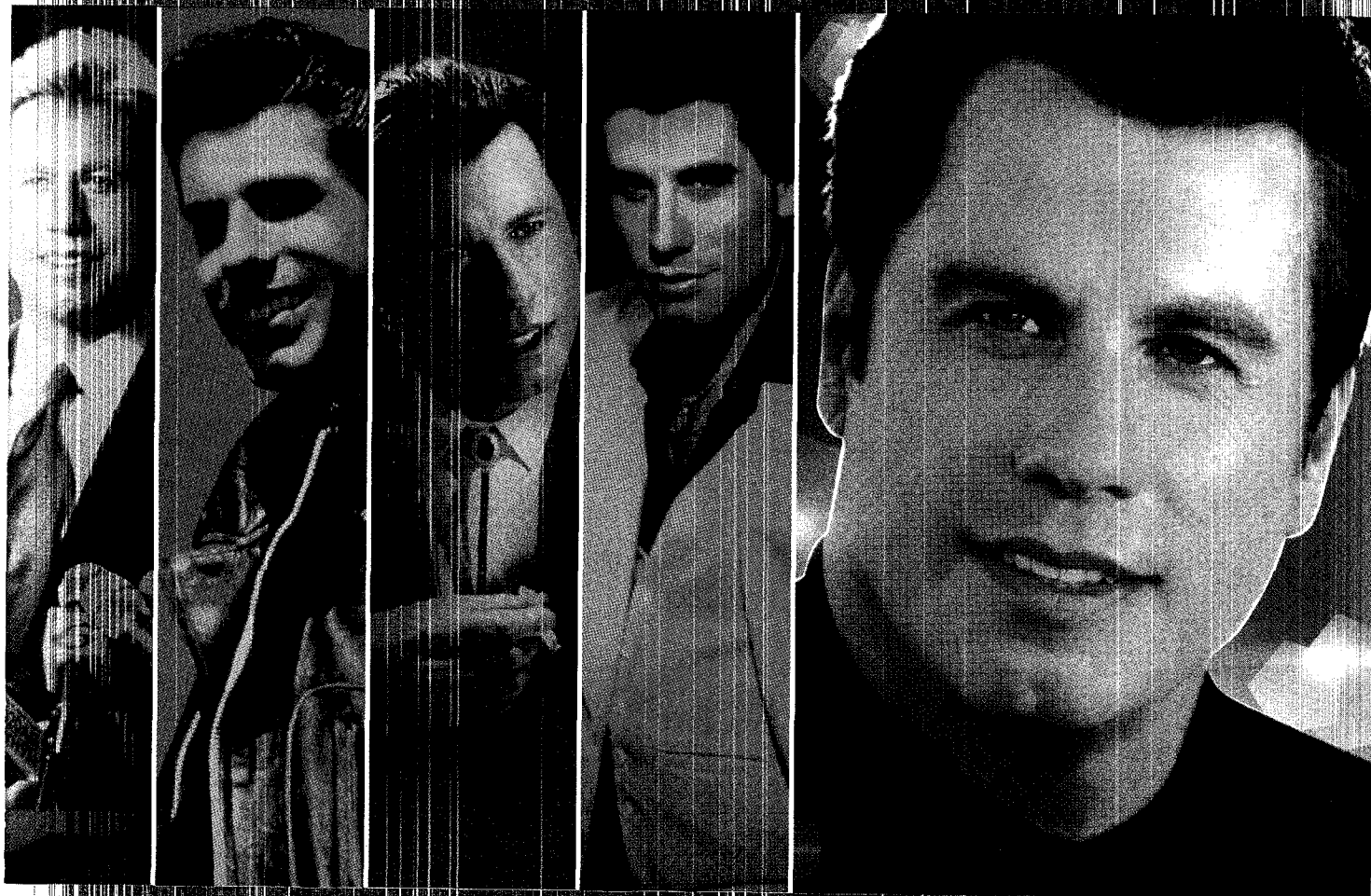


Yo La Tengo plays a run of holiday concerts at Maxwell's, in Hoboken.

Costumes made from (and inspired by) animals, on display at the Met.

Lorraine Hunt Lieberson sings with the New York Philharmonic.

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**THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS**

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AFTER THE BALL

The American premiere of a musical confection by Noël Coward, based on Oscar Wilde's "Lady Windermere's Fan." Directed by Tony Walton. In previews. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

LA CAGE AUX FOLLES

A revival of Jerry Herman and Harvey Fierstein's musical about a gay couple who disguise themselves as husband and wife. Gary Beach and Daniel Davis lead the cast. Directed by Jerry Zaks. Two previews on Dec. 8. Opens Dec. 9 at 6:30. (Marquis, Broadway at 46th St. 212-307-4100.)

FAT PIG

A man tries to muster the courage to date an overweight woman, in a new play by Neil LaBute that stars Jeremy Piven, Ashlie Atkinson, Keri Russell, and Andrew McCarthy. Directed by Jo Bonney. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

FRANKENSTEIN

Mary Shelley's horror story is adapted by the Flying Machine, in a multimedia production directed by Joshua Carlbach. Previews begin Dec. 9. Opens Dec. 11 at 7:30. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 212-868-7444.)

THE HIGHWAYMAN

The young playwright Julia Jarcho directs her new play, inspired by the famous Alfred Noyes poem—about Bess the landlord's daughter and the highwayman who comes riding up to the inn, across the ghostly moor. Dec. 9-19, Thursdays through Sundays. (The Stable, 16 Main St., Dumbo, Brooklyn. For more information, call 212-330-9042.)

ISABELLA'S ROOM

BAM's Next Wave Festival closes the season with a multimedia work by Belgium's Needcompany, which recaps the events of the last century, filtered through the imagination of a ninety-year-old blind Parisienne. Performed in English and French with English surtitles. Dec. 14 and Dec. 16-18 at 7:30. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100.)

THE RIVALS

Mark Lamos directs a revival of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's comedy of manners, starring Brian Murray, Emily Bergl, Richard Easton, Matt Letscher, and Dana Ivey (as Mrs. Malaprop). In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AGA-BOOM

Gleeful, inventively messy mayhem from some of the world's most expert clowns and contortionists, directed by the Cirque du Soleil veteran Dimitri Bogatirev. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

THE BALTIMORE WALTZ

Mark Brokaw directs the Signature Theatre Company's revival of Paula Vogel's Obie-winning 1992 play—an H.I.V. allegory—about a woman who squeezes as much joy as possible from life after she is stricken with a mysterious disease. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

BELLE ÉPOQUE

The life of Toulouse-Lautrec (Mark Povinelli) at the Moulin Rouge, as imagined by Martha Clarke and Charles L. Mee. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

DAME EDNA: BACK WITH A VENGEANCE!

At seventy, Dame Edna (Barry Humphries) is still capering, still swift, and, like all great clowns, still capable of taking an audience to the frontiers of the marvellous. Her act is really a vaudeville turn; she has almost singlehandedly taken that tradition of glorious frivolity into the twenty-first century. The spectacle is not just exhilarating, it's heroic. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/6/04.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

DAVE GORMAN'S GOOGLEWHACK!

ADVENTURE

This likable, self-deprecating British motormouth gives a very good show. It's a shaggy-dog story of an unusual kind. Gorman spent two years crisscrossing the globe (from England to France, America, Australia, China, and back), tracking down the authors of Googlewhacks—Internet oddities in which two strange words, when combined in a search query, produce only one hit. For instance, when Gorman put in the search terms “dork turnspit,” he found a Web site belonging to a man who collects photos of women with their pet dogs. (Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

DEMOCRACY

A strong production of Michael Frayn's play about the popular German Chancellor Willy Brandt (James Naughton) and the East German mole Günter Guillaume (Richard Thomas), who served him and eventually sank him. Watching the all-male, business-suited cast animate a raft of names that only Cold War historians know anymore—Horst Ehmke, Herbert Wehner, Arno Kretschmann—gives peculiar satisfaction. It's as if the gray pages of *Wer Ist Wer*—the German *Who's Who*—were to come to life before your eyes in unsuspected color and vibrancy. Directed by Michael Blakemore. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

DOUBT

A new play by John Patrick Shanley, about possible sexual abuse in a Catholic school, stars Cherry Jones, Brian F. O'Byrne, and Adriane Lenox. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

THE FOREIGNER

Larry Shue's chestnut about a shy Brit named Charlie who spends three days in a hillbilly hideaway is given delirious life by the physical clowning of Matthew Broderick (as Charlie), by Byron Jennings, as his chum “Froggy” LeSueur (in knee-socks and khaki shorts), and especially by Kevin Cahoon, as a half-wit named Ellard, whose goggle-eyed loopiness gives Don Knotts a run for his money. Directed by Scott Schwartz. (Roundabout at Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Phylicia Rashad stars in the New York premiere of the ninth play in August Wilson's ten-play chronicle of the African-American experience. Directed by Kenny Leon. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE HASTY HEART

The Keen Company presents John Patrick's serio-comic drama about soldiers in a British Army hospital in Southeast Asia during the Second World War. Directed by Jonathan Silverstein. (Theater Three, 311 W. 43rd St. 212-868-4444.)

HEMINGWAY

A new play written and performed by Laurence Luckinbill imagines Papa's final hours. An Abingdon Theatre Company production, directed by David Margulies. (312 W. 36th St. 212-868-4444. Through Dec. 12.)

MARRIAGE

The Pearl Theatre Company presents Gogol's rarely performed 1833 comedy about a charming young woman who is wooed by four vain, craven suitors. The cast eats up the roles, which are cartoony in their broadness, and Milton Ehre and Fruma Gottschalk's translation is both lively and contemporary. Directed by Jesse Berger. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

MODERN ORTHODOX

Jason Biggs, Molly Ringwald, Craig Bierko, and Jenn Harris star in a new comedy by Daniel Goldfarb about faith, love, and the diamond district. Directed by James Lapine. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

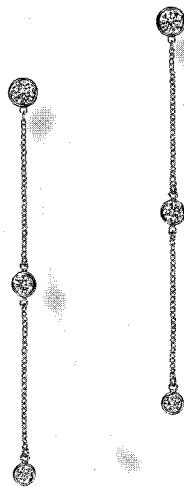
NEWSICAL

The director Donna Drake brings her screwball timing and acid wit to this musical attack on the headlines, updated daily. Created by Rick Crom and performed by a comic cast, including Jeff Skowron and Kim Cea. (Upstairs at Studio 54, 254 W. 54th St. 212-307-4100.)

9 PARTS OF DESIRE

Heather Raffo's remarkable one-woman show, which bears witness to Iraqi women's political op-

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Elsa Peretti

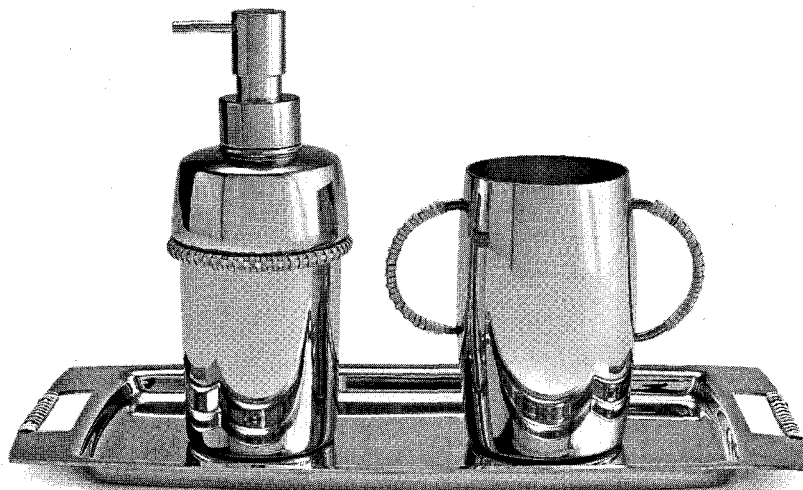
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pression, is an example of how art can remake the world and eloquently name pain. Based on research and dozens of interviews conducted on four continents over eleven years (Raffo portrays nine women in the course of the evening), the play brings news of the psychic life of the brutalized and allows us to think about the unthinkable. Directed by Joanna Settle. (11/8/04) (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200.)

A NUMBER

Sam Shepard—in his first stage appearance in thirty years—stars in Caryl Churchill's new play about the moral repercussions of human cloning. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

the characters, notably Lou (Dominic Chianese) and Diane (the fetching Erica Leerhsen), struggle under the weight of other people's desires—obligations that turn out to be secondhand. (12/6/04) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

700 SUNDAYS

Billy Crystal makes his Broadway debut in a play about his life. Written by Crystal, with additional material by Alan Zweibel. Directed by Des McAnuff. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

SOUVENIR

A new play by Stephen Temperley, about the eccentric socialite Florence Foster Jenkins, who gave terrible recitals at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Carnegie

BROOKLYN: THE MUSICAL

Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

BUG

Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St., at Seventh Ave. 212-239-6200.

CHICAGO

Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

DEATH AND THE PLOUGHMAN

Classic Stage, 136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200. (Closes Dec. 12.)

EYE-OLUTION

Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200.

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100.

FIVE BY TEN

Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. (Closes Dec. 19.)

42ND STREET

Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100. (Closes Jan. 2.)

GOLDA'S BALCONY

Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. (Closes Jan. 2.)

THE GOOD BODY

Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

GUANTANAMO

45 Bleecker Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100. (Closes Dec. 19.)

HAIRSPRAY

Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

JEWTOPIA

Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.

THE LION KING

New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

MAMMA MIA!

Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.

MOVIN' OUT

Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.

'NIGHT, MOTHER

Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

PEOPLE ARE WRONG!

Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.

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Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-505-0700.

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.

TRYING

Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.

TWELVE ANGRY MEN

American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.

WHOOPI

Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

WICKED

Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

WONDERFUL TOWN

Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

In Balanchine's "Nutcracker" (now celebrating its fiftieth anniversary), the Christmas party is gemütlich, the nightmare scary, the tree tall, and Candyland just what it should be: a child's dream of heaven. Tchaikovsky wrote the music at the peak of his powers as a fabulist, and Balanchine's imagination rose to meet it. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Dec. 7-9 and Dec. 14 at 6, Dec. 10 at 8, Dec. 11 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 12 at 1 and 5. Through Jan. 2.)

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE

The company's five-week season at City Center continues with a rotating repertory and two new works set to music by seventies icons. In "Shining

PIER CONSA GRA



The Flying Machine presents its adaptation of "Frankenstein" at the SoHo Rep.

PACIFIC OVERTURES

B. D. Wong stars in the Roundabout's revival of the 1976 Sondheim musical (book by John Weidman) about the impact that American culture has had on Japanese society since Commodore Perry landed in Japan in 1853. Directed by Amon Miyamoto. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

RODNEY'S WIFE

Playwrights Horizons presents a new play, set in 1962, in which an aging film star and his wife have a relationship breakdown in Rome. With David Strathairn, as Rodney, Maryann Plunkett, as his wife, and Haviland Morris, as his meddling sister. Written and directed by Richard Nelson. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

A SECOND HAND MEMORY

Woody Allen's powerful tale of the deferred dreams of a Jewish Brooklyn family in the nineteen-fifties, which Allen also directs, takes its title from the cobbled recollections of the romantic, peripatetic narrator, Alma Wolfe (Elizabeth Marvel), who has been banished from the family and travels the world in search of love and experience. But most of

Hall in the nineteen-forties. Judy Kaye plays the be-nighted songstress. Directed by Vivian Matalon and conducted by Jack Lee. (York Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 212-868-4444.)

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

The Peccadillo Theatre Company presents a new musical about Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, Alexander Woollcott, and other Algonquin regulars. Book, lyrics, and music by Ginny Redington and Tom Dawes. Directed by Dan Wackerman. (Bank Street Theatre, 155 Bank St. 212-868-4444. Through Dec. 19.)

ALSO PLAYING

AVENUE Q

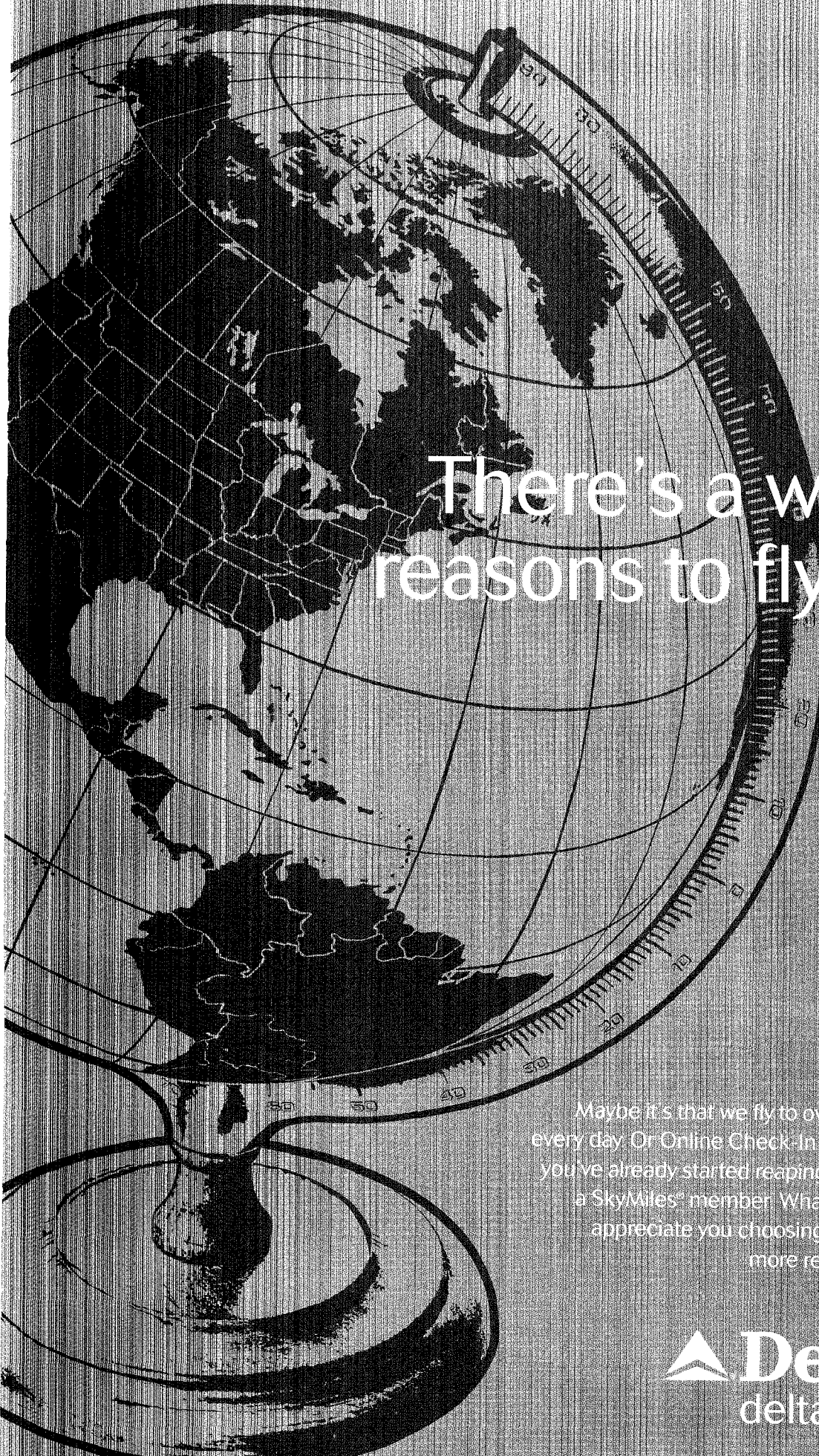
Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.

BOMBAY DREAMS

Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.



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THIS WEEK'S WEB EXCLUSIVE

David Grann talks about
the mysterious death of
the world's foremost expert
on Sherlock Holmes.

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*A decade of New Yorker
Film Notes.*

*A calendar of New Yorker
events across the country.*

Star." David Parsons makes the most of the good-times sounds of Earth, Wind, & Fire, setting five couples grooving to the music, including Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell and Dion Wilson, who perform a standout steamy duet. In "Love Stories," the songs of Stevie Wonder get a more adventurous—if less fun—treatment, with Judith Jamison, Robert Battle, and the hip-hop master Rennie Harris applying their respective styles. The week also features a new production of Ailey's "Hidden Rites," from 1973. ♦ Dec. 7 at 7: "Bounty Verses," "Burlesque," and "Grace." ♦ Dec. 8 at 8: "Following the Subtle Current Upstream," "Shining Star," and "Revelations." ♦ Dec. 9 at 8: "Memoria," "Hidden Rites," and "Revelations." ♦ Dec. 10 at 8: "Night Creature," "Treading," "Shining Star," and "Revelations." ♦ Dec. 11 at 2: "Grace," "Hidden Rites," and "Revelations." ♦ Dec. 11 at 8: "Hidden Rites," "Burlesque," and "Love Stories." ♦ Dec. 12 at 3: "Hidden Rites," "Shining Star," and "Revelations." ♦ Dec. 12 at 7:30: "Memoria," "Treading," "Juba," and "The Winter in Lisbon." ♦ Dec. 14 at 7: "Love Stories," "Rainbow Round My Shoulder," and "Revelations." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Through Jan. 2.)

BALLET HISPÁNICO

"Eternamente y un Día," Peter Pucci's new dance for the company, is set to Mexican folk songs recorded by the Kronos Quartet and follows the dancers' exuberance down familiar paths. Two programs alternate: one pairs Pucci's dance with Ramón Oller's elegiac, Gypsy-themed "Bury Me Standing"; the other features last year's historical survey of Latin social dance, "NightClub." ♦ Dec. 7-8 at 8 and Dec. 11-12 at 2: "Eternamente y un Día" and "Bury Me Standing." ♦ Dec. 9-11 at 8 and Dec. 12 at 7:30: "NightClub." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800.)

TERE O'CONNOR DANCE

A current of hysteria flows through O'Connor's willfully spare new work, "Frozen Mommy." Long moments of stillness and silence bespeak turmoil below the surface, which surges forth in sarcastic gestures, screams, laughing fits, and bursts of aggression. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Dec. 8-11 at 8.)

"CALIFORNIA"

In John Jasperse's new piece, inspired by the California gold rush, dancers in flight suits use leaf blowers to buffet a gleaming futuristic sculpture by Ammar Elouieni, which dominates the stage. As they attack the enormous prop, the dancers suffer collateral damage: fluid duos and trios are ripped apart, heads and limbs flop pathetically. Set to a dissonant score by the longtime Matthew Barney collaborator Jonathan Bepler, performed live with Foley effects and four grand pianos. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Dec. 7-11 at 7:30.)

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY

The troupe displays its vigorous, unstructured artistry in eight new Merce "events." Each is set to a distinct live score and décor, which the dancers will hear and see for the first time on the day of performance. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Dec. 14 at 7:30. Through Dec. 19.)

MARIA HASSABI

In "Dead Is Dead," her first evening-length piece to be performed in the U.S., the Greek-born choreographer tackles the overstimulation of urban life. Hassabi's six dancers, wearing avant-garde garb by the downtown designers As Four, emulate pedestrians in city streets—remaining aloof while standing side by side and breaking into self-contained solos and duets. They are set off by a chaotic multimedia backdrop: a graffitied wall, an unpredictable musical collage, and live microphones. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Dec. 9-11 at 7:30.)

"BUKHARAN WEDDING"

In the former Bukharan Emirate (now Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), Jewish weddings were noisy, celebratory affairs that featured percussive music (played by women known as *sozandas*) and included traditions from nearby Iran and Turkey. The dancing focusses on motions of the hands, shoulders, and head. Tofakhon Pinkhasova leads an exploration of the form at the 92nd Street Y. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Dec. 8 at 8.)

POP NOTES



DISCO RETRO

In 1978, a former Harvard student and occasional underwear model named Cristina Monet teamed up with her boyfriend, Michael Zilkha, heir to the Mothercare fortune, to record a clunky satire called "Disco Clone" for Zilkha's new label, Ze. Cristina—as she was known professionally—called it "the worst song I have ever heard" and proposed that it be performed as "Brechtian pastiche." Until her last release, in 1984, this seems to be how she approached every song she sang. Resurrected after more than a decade, Ze Records has released Cristina's entire body of work on two CDs: "Doll in the Box" and "Sleep It Off."

"Doll," which collects Cristina's 1980 début album and assorted singles, is weird and wonderful. The writer and producer August Darnell—the guiding hand behind Kid Creole and the Coconuts—locates Cristina in classic nineteen-seventies New York disco and dots the landscape with Ellingtonian jazz and calypso rhythms. Cristina is cheerfully out of step with everything, a proud amateur full of ideas. On a cover of the Beatles' "Drive My Car," she plays the ingénue with such over-the-top breathiness that we can't help but think that she's up to something sinister. Cristina and Darnell's version of the Leiber and Stoller song "Is That All There Is?" deletes some of the original verses, instead substituting lyrics about a sixteen-year-old who meets "bored-looking bankers" at a night club and has an S & M relationship with "the most wonderful boy in New York." Though it's among the most effective recordings of the song, the songwriters did not approve of the modifications and demanded that all copies of the single be withdrawn.

On Cristina's second album, "Sleep It Off," which was released in 1984, the producer Don Was makes the record echo with hard drum machines and nasty sounds; it's a forerunner of the recent musical fad called electroclash. Cristina somehow sounds even more jaded. "Don't Mutilate My Mink" is a class-conscious parody, the kind of thing Johnny Rotten might have recorded if he had tried to bring down the welfare state one disco at a time. Best of all, Cristina finally gets a shot at a Brecht-Weill song, "The Ballad of Immoral Earnings," from "Threepenny Opera." She nails it.

—Sasha Frere-Jones

MISNOMER DANCE THEATRE

The 92nd Street Y's "Sundays @ Three" series presents new and recent work by Chris Elam. In the absurd yet poignant "Maggie & George," a country couple holding picture frames woo each other with pretzely partnering. The solo "Three Told Tin Man" shows off Elam's rubbery agility, and "Toes of a Snail" displays what the choreographer learned during a recent residency with the Cuban company DanzAbierta. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Dec. 12 at 3.)

"FRESH TAKES ON ART AND COLLABORATION"

To coincide with the Noguchi Museum's exhibit on the sculptor's contributions to Martha Graham's dance theatre, Topaz Arts presents several contemporary art/dance collaborations. Paz Tanjuaquino and Todd Richmond perform their light fantasy, "Displaced Garden" (1994), and a work in progress. The choreographer Christalyn Wright and the designer Angélica Mejía address the theme of independence versus motherhood with taped testimonials and action figures, and Steffany George, playing both choreographer and designer, sets a farmer dancing with a field of potatoes. (55-03 39th Ave., Woodside, Queens. For more information, call 718-505-0440. Dec. 12, from 2 to 4.)

"MENAGERIE"

In a new work for Danspace's City/Dans series, Guta Hedewig and her troupe reference animal behavioral patterns. The dancers pick up on small details: elephants, even when running, are never entirely airborne—one foot is on the ground at all times; red admiral butterflies spend their manic energy hopping, flipping, and leaping rather than gliding smoothly. With a video installation by Anja Hitzberger and an original score by Edward Ratliff, performed live by the Sirius String Quartet. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Dec. 9-12 at 8:30.)

"FIRST NOH AND KYOGEN PROGRAM WITNESSED BY AMERICANS"

The Japan Society hosts a rare restaging of the 1879 program that introduced these two classical Japanese performing arts to Westerners (President Ulysses S. Grant was in the original audience). Presented by members of Tokyo's Nohgaku Kyokai company, many of whom are designated as "Living National Treasures" by the Japanese government. (333 E. 47th St. 212-752-3015. Dec. 9-10 at 7:30.)

"THE YORKVILLE NUTCRACKER"

Dances Patrelle presents its annual staging of the ballet, which transfers the action to Manhattan in the late nineteenth century and is set in Gracie Mansion, Central Park, and the New York Botanical Garden. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, 68th St. between Park and Lexington Aves. 212-772-4448. Dec. 9 at 7, Dec. 10 at 6, Dec. 11 at 2 and 7, and Dec. 12 at 1 and 6.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

Dec. 11 at 8: The **Romeiko Ensemble**, featuring vocalists from Greece and instrumentalists from Turkey, performs a program of Byzantine chant and Turkish Sufi music. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536.)

THE PIXIES

One of the most beloved alternative bands of the late eighties, the Pixies combined arty surrealist imagery with pop harmony and ferocious guitar. After more than a decade apart, the Boston foursome has reunited. They may be a little rounder and grayer, but they have lost none of their peculiar fire. Or, for that matter, their popularity: these shows have been sold out for months. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 212-307-7171. Dec. 11-16 at 8 and Dec. 18 at 5:30 and midnight.)

KEVIN SPACEY

The actor and director's latest project is "Beyond the Sea," a bio-pic about Bobby Darin. Here he'll attempt to bring to life the novelty hit "Splish Splash," the Broadway standard "Mack the Knife," the folk ballad "If I Were a Carpenter," and other favorites of the hardworking hipster. (Rose Theatre, Time Warner Center, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. Dec. 14 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Dec. 11: The **Max Weinberg 7**, the house band for "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," provides a shot of rockin' boogie and jump blues. Dec. 12: **Ian Hunter**, the charismatic former lead singer of the great seventies glam rockers Mott the Hoople, may not have reached the commercial success of peers like David Bowie and Queen, but his cynical, self-effacing lyrical style figured prominently in the gestation of British punk rock. His recent solo offerings, culminating in the superb 2000 album "Rant," are as powerful as his vintage work.



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IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Dec. 10: The eager Midwestern jam band **Umphrey's McGee**, Dec. 11: **Lars Frederiksen and the Bastards** espouse a by-the-book approach to punk rock. Their mohawks have meticulously pointy tips, and their music has a profound disregard for melody. This is a gruffer ensemble than Frederiksen's other outfit, **Rancid**, and it's for those who like their punk ugly and loud. Dec. 14: Britain's **Cradle of Filth** occupies a slippery plateau between extremism and parody. The black-metal quintet embraces juvenile goth clichés both sartorially and musically (song titles include "Absinthe with Faust" and "Coffin Fodder"), but they do it all with a wink.

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Dec. 10: **One Ring Zero** is Michael Hearst and Joshua Camp, two friends who first met as music-composition students in Virginia a few years ago. The pair favor accordions, organs, theremins, homemade instruments, and the occasional brass horn, and they live up to their circusy name with haunting and amusing soundscapes. They've become the darlings of the local literary scene, and their latest project is a book-and-CD combination called "As Smart as We Are." It features lyrics by such writers as Rick Moody, Jonathan Ames, Darin Strauss, A. M. Homes, Myla Goldberg, and Aaron Naparstek, all of whom will be joining the band at this show. Dec. 11: The guitarist and gravelly-voiced singer **Howard Fishman** and his band mix hot old jazz with cool new music. Dec. 12: **Lapis Lazuli** is the latest incarnation of the downtown guitar punisher **Kurt Wolf**, an alumnus of rude, iconoclastic outfits like **Pussy Galore**, **Boss Hog**, and **Foetus Inc.** Best known for music that turns a deaf ear on finesse, Wolf is now experimenting with an atmospheric, noirish sound.

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Dec. 8: The local ensemble **Las Rubias del Norte** rearranges Latin big-band music for a handful of instruments, including the glockenspiel. With the **Roberto Rodriguez Septet**, **Rodriguez**, a percussionist for **Joe Jackson** who is also the only real Cuban in **Marc Ribot's** band **Los Cubanos Postizos**, delves into Cuban jazz and Jewish music without ever losing the dance beat.

LIVING ROOM

154 Ludlow St. (212-533-7235)—Last year, **Greta Gertler**, a Brooklyn-based Australian expat with a weakness for lushly orchestrated seventies-era singer-songwriter pop, attracted the attention of area independent-radio fans with her first album, "The Baby That Brought Bad Weather." Snippets of her latest record, "Nervous Breakthroughs," which she recorded with her Sydney-based chamber-pop group **Peccadillo**, have also begun appearing on end-of-the-dial playlists. On Dec. 9, she performs songs from the new album.

MAXWELL'S

1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-653-1703)—Dec. 7-14: **Yo La Tengo's** Hanukkah party (see This Week).

NORTHSIX

66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—Dec. 14: **Travis Morrison**, the front man for the defunct Washington, D.C., indie-rock band **Dismemberment Plan**, is a loopy, spastic, and hyperemotive performer. His debut solo album, "Travistan," is a wildly eclectic, self-involved collection.

SATALLA

37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—Dec. 10: The guitarist **Duke Robillard**, one of the founders of **Roomful of Blues** and a former member of the **Fabulous Thunderbirds**. Dec. 11: **Candido & Graciela** are two legends from Cuba. **Graciela**, who is eighty-eight, was the lead vocalist for **Machito** and his **Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra** from the forties to the seventies. She had been retired for more than a decade when she got a call last year from the conguero **Candido**, whom she's known since the forties, when Cuban rhythms danced with American big-band jazz. The pair recorded an album, "Inolvidable," that shows **Graciela** still in fine form. Dec. 12: A night of washboards and accordions with the Louisiana band **Dikki Du** and the **Zydeco Crew**.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND

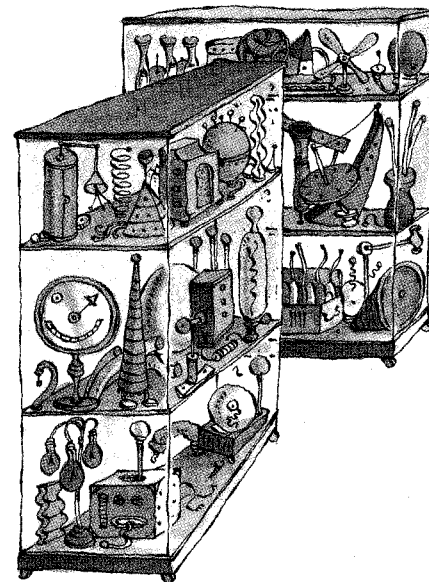
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Dec. 8-11: The pianist **Arturo O'Farrill** takes a break from leading **Lincoln Center's Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra** to front a small group, **Riza Negra**, that includes the trumpeter **Tom Harrell** and the promising young drummer **Dafnis Prieto**.

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through Dec. 12: The mighty pianist **McCoy Tyner** teams up with two titans of seventies fusion, the drummer **Billy Cobham** and the bassist **Stanley Clarke**. Don't worry if you can't get a seat—you should be able to hear them from outside the club.

CARLYLE HOTEL

Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The **Café Carlyle**, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wrap-around murals, and, through Dec. 31, **Bobby Short**.



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DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA

Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Through Dec. 12: The **Gonzalo Rubalcaba** quartet. The Cuban expat pianist has developed restraint in his playing, becoming a deeper musician. His faithful drummer **Ignacio Berroa** remains one of jazz's great unsung heroes.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY

540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Through Dec. 31: The high-spirited entertainer **Michael Feinstein** is a true mensch. He delivers his annual holiday program with ecumenical evenhandedness.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through Dec. 12: **Bill Bruford**, the former drummer for **Yes** and **King Crimson**, now gets his kicks from **Earthworks Underground**, a tight jazz ensemble that he leads with the saxophonist **Tim Garland**. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul**. The **Mingus Big Band** is here on Tuesdays.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Dec. 9-12: The **Bill Mays** trio. One of the great bands nobody knows, this group boasts a marvellous bassist, **Martin Wind**, and drummer, **Matt Wilson**, as well as its mainstream leader on piano. An album will be recorded at this engagement.

SWEET RHYTHM

88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Dec. 10-11: The trumpeter **Brian Lynch** stocks his **Spheres of Influence** band with players who know Latin music as well as they know jazz.

SERGIO RUZZIER

TONIC

107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—What happens when you exhaust a repertoire of more than two hundred original tunes inspired by Jewish scales and musical themes? If you are **John Zorn**, you write another two hundred and forty compositions over a mere two months. The saxophonist and composer celebrates his prolific surge with the Masada mini-festival on Dec. 8-11. Every set will feature new material. The trumpeter **Dave Douglas**, the guitarist **Marc Ribot**, the percussionist **Cyro Baptista**, and the pianist **Sylvie Courvoisier** are among those who've been chosen to lend a hand.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Dec. 12: **Bill Frisell**, a brilliantly original guitarist who upended the instrument's traditional role in jazz, is also a gifted composer and arranger. The latter two attributes will be on display during this two-week engagement as the trumpeter **Ron Miles** and the saxophonist **Greg Tardy** join his trio. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—“**Wild: Fashion Untamed**” opens in the Costume Institute galleries on Dec. 7 (see This Week). ♦ A remarkable roomful of paintings depicting an iconic George Washington dominates the show “**Gilbert Stuart**.” Staring from the walls like eighteenth-century premonitions of photographic reproduction are multiple copies of Stuart's three famous Presidential portraits—all authenticated as from the Master's hand, and originally sold at a cost of a hundred dollars each. All of Stuart's sitters are given a highly detailed treatment, from the lace-frilled ladies and their florid, bewigged husbands to John Adams, twinkly and irascible at eighty-nine, and even the chagrined-looking dog who posed with the Duke of Northumberland's children. Through Jan. 16. ♦ “**The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork 1530-1830**” gathers weavings—featuring native symbols like the puma and the butterfly mixed with imported mermaids and unicorns—and such a treasury of silver artifacts that entire galleries seem encased in gleaming foil. Through Dec. 12. ♦ “**Princely Splendor: The Dresden Court, 1580-1620**.” Through Jan. 30. ♦ Coincident with the Whitney's retrospective, the Met showcases a choice handful of works from its permanent collection in “**Romare Bearden at the Met**.” Through March 6. ♦ A wealth of art and artifacts recovered from the tombs of ancient luminaries is on view in “**China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 A.D.**” Through Jan. 23. ♦ “**William Kentridge**.” Through April 10. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—The museum has reopened in its renovated and enlarged home and is presenting a series of exhibits related to its metamorphosis. ♦ “**Yoshio Taniguchi: Nine Museums**” surveys other work by the architect who redesigned the museum. Through Jan. 31. ♦ “**Michael Wesely: Open Shutter at the Museum of Modern Art**.” The German photographer turned his long-exposure method (he has left the shutter open for as long as three years) on MOMA while it was under construction. Through mid-2005. ♦ “**Projects 82: Mark Dion—Rescue Archaeology**.” Dion excavated traces of the former Rockefeller town house from beneath the sculpture garden for this site-specific project. Through March 14. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Fridays, 10:30 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—“**The Aztec Empire**” lines the Guggenheim's spiral with more than four hundred artifacts, from carvings depicting harvest work to implements for human sacrifice. Through Feb. 13. ♦ The Guggenheim has the largest collection of work by **Vasily Kandinsky** in the United States, and its curators have decided to de-

vote one gallery to his work permanently. “**Kandinsky Gallery: An Inaugural Selection**” kicks things off. ♦ “**Recent Acquisitions: Contemporary Sculpture**.” Through Jan. 27. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—“**Isamu Noguchi: Master Sculptor**.” Through Jan. 16. ♦ The city's museums are full of **Romare Bearden's** work right now, but “**The Art of Romare Bearden**” is the biggest and most thorough show. Through Jan. 9. ♦ The trend toward grandly immersive video environments is reversed in “**Small: The Object in Film, Video, and Slide Installation**.” Ranging from the early sixties to the present, the objects favor Conceptualist or structuralist inquiry; this means they are often funny. A pair of hands in **John Baldessari's** “**Folding Hat**” (1970-1971) methodically crush, then puff up the crown of a fedora, while **Jonathan Monk's** film from 2000 examines **Sol LeWitt's** cubes in every possible combination of frontal, side, and rear lighting. Best is **LeWitt's** own peepshow (1964), in which ten little holes bring one's eye successively closer to photographs of a naked woman, until she dissolves into meaningless shadow. With **Matthew Higgs**, **Alan Phelan**, **Michael Snow**, and **Rirkrit Tiravanija**. Through Feb. 6. ♦ “**Bill Viola: Five Angels for the Millennium**,” a large-scale video installation made in 2001. Through March 6. ♦ “**James Lee Byars: The Perfect Silence**.” Drawings, sculptures, and installations by the artist, who died in 1997.

TABLES FOR TWO



PAOLA'S

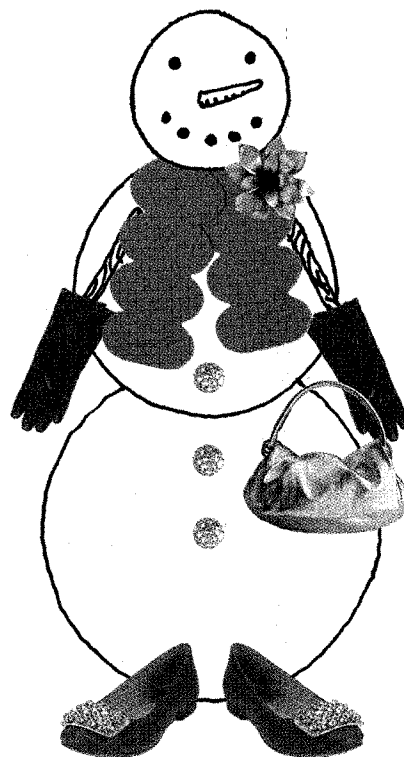
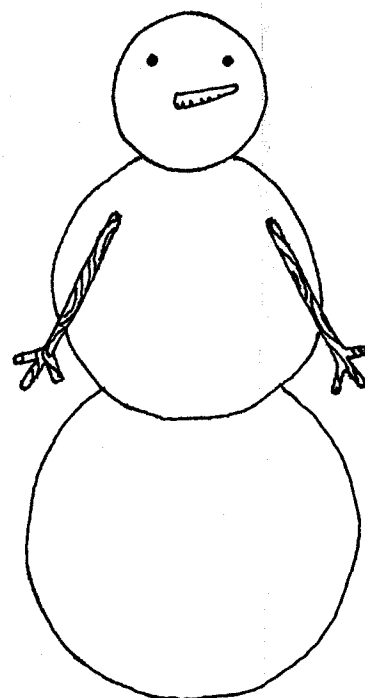
245 E. 84th St. (212-794-1890)—Last winter, **Paola Bottero**, the proprietor and chef of this longtime Yorkville mainstay, turned over her kitchen to **John Baron**, a **Mario Batali** acolyte. Baron had been called upon to modernize the menu—“to convey ‘downtown’ creativity to the Upper East Side,” according to a press release—with such *cucina creativa* contributions as home-cured sardines and stuffed leg of rabbit. The transplant didn't take. The regulars grouched and pined for their red sauce. Neighborhood restaurants have to heed the neighbors, and so a couple of months ago Bottero, a slightly cranky but beloved figure who was born (as her Web site puts it) “in Rome, the capital of Italy,” took over again, retaining a few vestiges of Baron's brief term: the biscotti, for example, which are made in Brooklyn by his wife, **Sigrid Benedetti**, another **Batali**ian, with whom Baron now runs **Hope & Union**, in Williamsburg.

This isn't to say that Paola's is too fusty or square, at least compared to some of the other Italian restaurants in the vicinity. You'll see more fur coats and face-lifts around the corner at **Elio's**, and you're more likely to be flagrantly ignored by the waitstaff down a few blocks at **Parma**. Still, on less busy nights, the crew at Paola's can be slack enough to make you wonder what constitutes a punitive but not too hostile tip. Like the clientele, the space—Paola's third, and biggest, home in its twenty-three-year existence—is understated and neat, with an agreeable insinuation of scruffiness.

At neighborhood restaurants, you find what you like and stick with it. Facing a lifetime of Sunday dinners at Paola's (“**Misty**” playing over and over, the arteries hardening, the kids growing hairier and more sullen), a Yorkvillean might find succor in some of the simpler things, such as the springy surface tension of the made-to-order mozzarella (served warm), or the hand-rolled spoons of ricotta gnocchi. The mushroom ravioli, the *bucatini matriciana*, and the braised lamb shank invite many happy returns. If not, there's always the capacious wine list. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées \$14-\$25.)

—**Nick Paumgarten**

gifts with a wink



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Through March 6. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

ASIA SOCIETY

Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-517-2742)—Women played polo in Tang China (618-907), Savafid Iran (1501-1722), and Mughal India (1526-1858); stone game boards have been unearthed in Asia dating to 7000 B.C.; and cards, backgammon, snakes and ladders, and chess all originated on the Asian continent. The games of chance, skill, and memory presented in "Asian Games: The Art of Contest" feature bewilderingly elaborate equipment—Japanese shuttlecocks made to resemble blossoms, Edo-period leather boots for playing kickball, a red velvet pachisi cloth embroidered with gold wire from eighteenth-century India. Through Jan. 16. ♦ "In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India." Through Jan. 2. ♦ "When Gold Blossoms: Indian Jewelry from the Susan L. Beningson Collection." Through Jan. 23. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

FRICK COLLECTION

1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—Raphael's "La Fornarina" is visiting the United States for the first time ever. The lush and enigmatic nude portrait, often thought to show the artist's mistress, will be on view through Jan. 30. ♦ "European Bronzes from the Quentin Collection." Through Jan. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—This newly opened museum is Manhattan's first devoted entirely to Himalayan art. (Open Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 7; Wednesdays and Sundays, 11 to 5; and Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

GALLERIES-UPDOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

ADOLPH GOTTLIEB

"Pictograph" paintings from a seminal decade (1941-51) of Gottlieb's career. The canvases are divided into crooked grids and filled with signs and symbols, which grow increasingly abstract over time. Eyes, hands, and faces dominate "Eyes of Oedipus" (1941), considered the first work in the sequence. The later paintings are brighter, with pinks and ochres and lots of abstract Miró-esque squiggles. The Navajo-influenced "Pink and Indian Red" (1946) looks like a richly woven blanket, while other pieces, like the ominously titled "Descent Into Darkness" and "Dark Journey," suggest the artist's more sombre tendencies. Through Dec. 31. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292.)

Short List

ALFRED LESLIE

Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 212-987-4997. Through Dec. 22.

A. R. PENCK

Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623. Through Jan. 20.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

MATTHEW BUCKINGHAM

Hudson Valley history is examined in a forty-minute film, "Muhheakantuck: Everything Has a Name." Slow-panning, pink-tinted aerial shots of

the banks of the Hudson River are accompanied by a deadpan narrative of the Dutch West India Company's founding—for business, not religious, reasons—of New Netherland. The result is a devastating portrait of colonialism in a region Buckingham argues wasn't "discovered" by Europeans, but "invented and reinvented." Through Dec. 18. (Murray Guy, 453 W. 17th St. 212-463-7372.)

PETER CAMPUS

Collectively titled "Time's Friction," Campus's new suite of single-channel digital videos is a catalogue of cyclical return—a torn wheels against blue sky and choppy water, purple rocks are bashed by surf, a child plays in slow motion on a

poodle made from giant seashells, and enormous postcard images of the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, etc. Through Dec. 24. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200.)

ADAM HURWITZ

Hurwitz's painted scenes of naked body parts among green-gloved hands and surgical instruments appear at first blush to deal only with the operating theatre, but the X-rated gestures he splices in suggest otherwise. As luridly colored as they are imagined, the pictures have a seamless, airbrushed appearance that levels their varied sources—which include not only blue movies and medical drama but Mannerist saints. Through

Dec. 18. (Steinberg, 526 W. 26th St. 212-924-5770.)

ROBERT RYMAN

A fresh installment of formalist all-white paintings from an heir to Malevich, Manzoni, and Rauschenberg. This collection isn't as stellar as the one seen here two years ago, which had electric greens and reds peeking out from under the dappled white impasto. Here the field has been flattened, and the underpainting is dark and murky blue, gray, and black. The effect is more Constable than contemporary, with cumulous clusters gathering on the canvas's surface. Perhaps this is the Romantic Ryman, a quick detour in the course of his sublime and lengthy project, which is to demonstrate, like Mondrian, how an extreme reduction of elements can lead to a surprising infinity of options. Through Jan. 8. (Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-421-3292.)

"SELECTIONS FROM THE E. BUK COLLECTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND INVENTION"

Startlingly enchanting artifacts, some with serious historical significance, others more along the lines of entrants from an outsider science fair. Among the more odd-ball delights are a red pith helmet topped by a radio receiver (1949), a 1930 RCA-produced theremin, and a patent model for a perpetual-motion machine circa 1900. Through Dec. 18. (Burgin, 243 W. 18th St. 212-462-2668.)

Short List

ROZ CHAST

Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-627-2410. Opens Dec. 9.

PETER WEGNER

Henry Urbach, 526 W. 26th St. 212-627-0974. Through Dec. 11.

CHRISTOPHER WOOL

Luhning Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100. Through Dec. 23.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

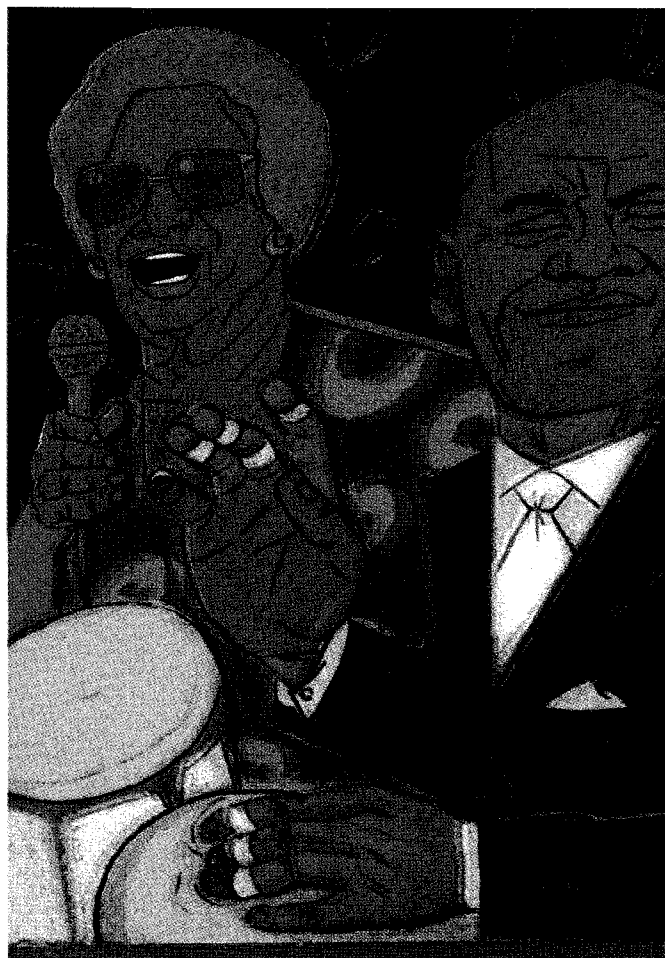
FRED SANDBACK

Pieces designed specifically for a wall in the gallery; they're accompanied by early work by Neil Jenney, Blinky Palermo, and Richard Tuttle. Through Dec. 22. (Roeder, 545 Broadway. 212-925-6098.)

"FIELD OF COLOR:

TANTRA DRAWINGS FROM INDIA"

A rough-cut jewel of a show, "Field of Color" presents thirty small works on paper by anonymous tantrikas, or devotional meditators, from the northwestern state of Rajasthan. Made mainly in the nineteen-nineties, the images are based on seventeenth-century religious treatises whose illustrations, over the centuries, have acquired a popular life all their own. A sky-blue circle, a carmine triangle, black-and-white stripes, or yellow spirals float on sheets of fibrous, creamy paper.



The Cuban musicians Candido & Graciela, at Satalla.

solarized green beach, and so forth. It's pretty, hypnotic, universally resonant, and a bit boring. Through Dec. 22. (Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-255-8450.)

HANS-PETER FELDMANN

Art can be simple—that's the message you get from this German Conceptualist. How about a handmade cardboard box on a pedestal, or a message clumsily scrawled on the wall that reads "This sentence I wrote backwards," or "Pyromaniac," a sculpture composed of matches and a singed, crumpled page from the New York Press? The photography in the show conveys the most mundane information, like how "my voyage to New York by boat" went, or the look of car radios "while good music was playing." The simplicity belies a sharp intelligence, however, as the work makes reference to and comments on everything from Duchamp to minimalism to Gerhard Richter. Through Jan. 8. (303 Gallery, at 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.)

KATHARINA FRITSCH

Fritsch's installation is an arid fantasy of ersatz tourist Paris, with white, green, purple, and black *paraphies* hanging from the ceiling, an oversized figurine of a nineteenth-century woman and her

HOLIDAYS

The New Yorker Promotion Department encourages you to find out more about these holiday activities happening in New York City this season.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS AT THE BRONX ZOO THROUGH JANUARY 9

This annual event at the Bronx Zoo celebrates the night, as hundreds of thousands of lights and more than 140 animal, dinosaur, and holiday sculptures set the stage for performances, stories, and songs about wildlife and winter. Visitors will also be treated to ice carving, encounters with costumed characters, and "The Polar Express Experience." Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays until December 19th, then nightly (except December 24th and 25th) through January 9th.

(718) 367-1010

www.bronxzoo.com

RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR THROUGH JANUARY 2

The Radio City Christmas Spectacular, starring the Rockettes, returns to New York with all-new theatrical elements as well as traditional favorites such as "Here Comes Santa Claus" and "The Living Nativity."

(212) 247-4777

www.radiocity.com

HOLIDAYS AT THE MET THROUGH JANUARY 6

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

The Metropolitan Museum celebrates the holiday season with a long-established tradition of Yuletide concerts, family activities, and special exhibitions. Highlights include the presentation of the museum's annual Christmas tree in the Medieval Sculpture Hall, featuring a twenty-foot, candlelit spruce and a Neapolitan Baroque crèche. Lighting ceremonies take place Friday and Saturday evenings at 7.

(212) 535-7710

www.metmuseum.org

GRAND CENTRAL HOLIDAY LASER LIGHT SHOWS THROUGH DECEMBER 31 MAIN CONCOURSE

The annual holiday laser light shows on the ceiling of Grand Central Terminal transform the constellations on the famed SkyCeiling into snowmen, skiers, famous New York City buildings, and more. Shows are presented on the hour and half-hour, between 11 A.M. and 9 P.M., through the holidays.

www.grandcentralterminal.com

EMERALD NUTS MIDNIGHT RUN DECEMBER 31 CENTRAL PARK

The New York Road Runners start the year off right by hosting an annual New Year's Eve party and run in Central Park that includes music, dancing, fireworks, a costume parade, and a four-mile fun run at midnight.

(212) 860-4455

www.nyrr.org

MENORAH LIGHTING DECEMBER 7-14

59TH STREET AND FIFTH AVENUE

The world's largest menorah, measuring 32 feet high, will be lit nightly on all evenings of Hanukkah. Prominent government officials and leaders of the Jewish community will be honored with lighting the menorah. There will be live music, food, and gifts for children following the lighting on December 12th.

(718) 778-6000

PAUL WINTER'S WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION DECEMBER 16-18

CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

This event, which includes music, theatre, and dance, celebrates the return of the sun after the longest night of the year, an ancient holiday tradition. Presented by Paul Winter and held annually at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the event, which is also broadcast on NPR, features a wide variety of musical styles and dazzling special effects.

(212) 662-2133

www.livingmusic.com

GEORGE BALANCHINE'S "THE NUTCRACKER" THROUGH JANUARY 2

The New York City Ballet's annual presentation of George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker" returns to celebrate its 50th anniversary. With 150 costumes in each performance (including a Dewdrop's costume adorned with 65 crystal "dewdrops") and a Christmas tree that grows to a height of 41 feet, the ballet remains an unforgettable holiday tradition.

(212) 870-5570

www.nycballet.com

CHORUS TREE THROUGH DECEMBER 26 SOUTH STREET SEAPORT

An annual tradition of choral performances at the Seaport continues with the world-renowned Big Apple Chorus. The chorus will sing around a 50-foot tree decorated with thousands of white lights. Performances are on Fridays at 6 and 7 P.M., Saturdays and Sundays (and December 24th) at 3 and 4 P.M.

(212) 732-7678

www.southstreetseaport.com

HOLIDAY WALKING TOURS NYC DISCOVERY WALKING TOURS

Holiday walking tours literally usher New Yorkers into the spirit of the season. Two favorites from NYC Discovery Walking Tours include the "Victorian Christmas: Origins of Christmas Traditions" tour and the "Greenwich Village Taverns at Christmas" tour. Tours are \$13. Public tours are scheduled at 2 and 5:15 P.M. on December 11th, 12th, 18th, 19th, 25th, and 26th. Private tours by appointment.

(212) 465-3331

They're eminently simple but pulsating with energy. Through Jan. 22. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 212-219-2166.)

"FLIPSIDE"

Artists who've participated in ArtsLink, an exchange program that sends American artists to Eastern Europe and brings their counterparts here, think about politics and "post-utopian" art fifteen years after the Iron Curtain was lifted. Lighthearted works, like the Bulgarian Pravdoliub Ivanov's "Pessimism No More!" (2002), a Swiss cheese with bandaged holes, are juxtaposed with darker musings, like Maja Bajevic's video of women washing cloths embroidered with Tito's

prints here are surrealistic nudes—foreshortened limbs or mounds of flesh—shot with a wide-angle lens in stark tonal contrast. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070. Through Jan. 8.)

LOUISE LAWLER

Lawler goes behind the scenes at museums and art fairs, photographing art in various states of undress. A well-known Gerhard Richter painting, "Ema (Nude on a Staircase)," which echoes Duchamp's famous work, lies on its side in a MOMA gallery. In another photograph, Maurizio Cattelan's huge papier-mâché Picasso head, which he commissioned an actor to wear around MOMA in 1998, glares out from under plastic. Behind it

forward, respectful way. The work was forgotten until Lee Friedlander discovered Bellocq's glass negatives in a New Orleans antique shop. I.C.P. has a selection of Friedlander's prints, shown at MOMA in 1970, and recently discovered vintage prints. Bill Owens's book "Suburbia" made him an instant star when it was published in 1972. His pictures of young families in their new tract homes in Livermore, California, spoke to Western migration, consumer culture, and shifting cultural mores. These equally canny pictures, entitled "Leisure," were taken about ten years later, just before Owens quit photography and opened a microbrewery. All shows open Dec. 10. (1133 Sixth Ave. 212-857-0045.)

Short List

ROS WELL ANGIER

Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868. Through Jan. 29.

BEATE GÜTSCHOW

Danziger, 521 W. 26th St. 212-629-6778. Through Jan. 15.

MORTEN NILSSON

ClampArt, 531 W. 25th St. 646-230-0020. Through Dec. 18.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S

Dec. 8 at 10:15 A.M.: A simple and serene red-and-black mask, from the inner coffin of a sarcophagus circa 1100 B.C., may be the most appealing offering in this sale of items from the Charles Pankow collection of Egyptian art; the most expensive, however, is likely to be a limestone statue of the steward Kar and his wife, Khen-tsetut, from the Fifth Dynasty, which is expected to bring approximately three hundred thousand dollars. ♦ Dec. 9 at 10:15 A.M.: A Roman imperial bronze head of Ptolemy of Mauritania—the last known descendant of Antony and Cleopatra—is the star lot in this sale of antiquities; for sheer mystery it is outranked by a selection of early-Bronze Age figurines, hauntingly half-formed tributes to unnamed goddesses. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S

Dec. 8 at 10 A.M.: Tiffany Studios leads this sale of twentieth-century decorative art and design with two classic leaded-glass-and-bronze table lamps (a "Peony" and a "Trumpet Creeper"), both expected to take in more than half a million dollars. There are more futuristic offerings as well, including aluminum lamps by Yonel Lebovici (the "Soucoupe" model) and Jacques Le Chevallier and René Koechlin. ♦ Dec. 9 at 10 A.M.: Alfred Munnings's "Going to the Meet" highlights a sale of sporting art. ♦ Dec. 9 at 2: A holiday sale of ancient jewelry, though not for the faint of heart. Many of these precious objects (such as a Greco-Persian blue chalcidony scaraboid from the late fifth century B.C. and a Byzantine silver finger ring made between the fifth and seventh centuries A.D.) feature the lunging beasts that prowled the ancient world, along with images of the men who ruled it (like Emperor Claudius, who glowers in a Roman onyx cameo portrait from the first century A.D.). ♦ Dec. 10 at 10 A.M. and 2: A headless yet monumental Roman bronze figure of a draped woman (probably an empress), larger than life, highlights a sale of antiquities. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

PHILLIPS

Dec. 13 at 2: Damien Hirst's snarky screen print "The Last Supper," inspired by prescription-drug labels, highlights a sale of contemporary art. ♦ Dec. 14 at 2 and 7: A major sale of modern and contemporary design features works by such masters as Breuer (chairs and desks designed for the apartment and office of Leopold Reidemeister) and Le Corbusier (a carved figure of "Modular Man," used for imprints on the walls of the architect's Unité d'Habitation, in Berlin-Charlottenburg). (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.)

EILEEN TRAVEL



Painted Russian eggs and drawings by Roz Chast at Saul, in Chelsea; opens Dec. 9.

slogans. Americans, including Joan Jonas and Tony Oursler, are outnumbered by Europeans. But the flip side is more intriguing anyway, as in Aleksandar Zograf's "Regards from U.S.A." comics, which detail the intricacies of American ideology through the eyes of a Serbian artist. Through Jan. 8. (Artists Space, 38 Greene St. 212-226-3970.)

Short List

ATSUKO TANAKA

Grey Art Gallery, 100 Washington Sq. E. 212-998-6780. Through Dec. 11.

TERRY WINTERS

Pratt Manhattan Gallery, 144 W. 14th St. 212-647-7778. Through Dec. 15.

"ARCHITECTURE AND REVOLUTION IN CUBA, 1959-1969"

Storefront for Art and Architecture, 97 Kenmare St. 212-431-5795. Through Dec. 11.

PHOTOGRAPHY

BILL BRANDT

On the centennial of his birth, this show provides the chance to see Brandt's influential series of black-and-white nudes, done for the most part in the nineteen-forties and fifties. Originally an assistant to Man Ray, Brandt was friendly with Brassai, whose "Paris de Nuit" inspired him to produce documentary work. His pictures of the English aristocracy and working people, industrialization in Northern England, and the effects of the Second World War established his career. The vintage

hangs a Thomas Struth photograph of visitors wandering through the Metropolitan. This is true insider's art, and a return to form for Lawler. Through Dec. 23. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 212-206-7100.)

"STAGING HAPPINESS"

This craftily curated show begins with vintage photographs from the mid-thirties that represent the vestiges of the Russian avant-garde—Georgy Petrusov's image of Vera Mukhina's famous "Monument to the Workers and Peasant Women," doubled in a reflecting pool; Alexander Rodchenko's stern soldiers under a "Workers of the World Unite!" banner. A staged image from Max Alpert's famous "Twenty-four Hours in the Life of the Filippov Family" was meant to convince non-Communist eyes that life in the U.S.S.R. was simply grand. Postwar photographs are heavily retouched and hand-painted, in some cases to the point of complete fabrication, culminating in the unforgettable scene of Lenin and Stalin chatting on a park bench. Through Dec. 30. (Nailya Alexander, 24 W. 57th St. 212-315-2211.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Three important photographers, Bill Owens, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, and E. J. Bellocq, provide a primer of sorts on twentieth-century American portraiture. Meatyard, an optician by trade who was from Lexington, Kentucky, died young in 1972, at the height of his powers. He took eerie, surrealistic pictures of his friends and family, often posed wearing plastic masks. This is the largest show of the photographer's work ever seen in New York, with a hundred and fifty images that span his too short career. Bellocq photographed prostitutes in their rooms around 1912 in a straight-

LET'S TEMPT SANTA TO STAY.

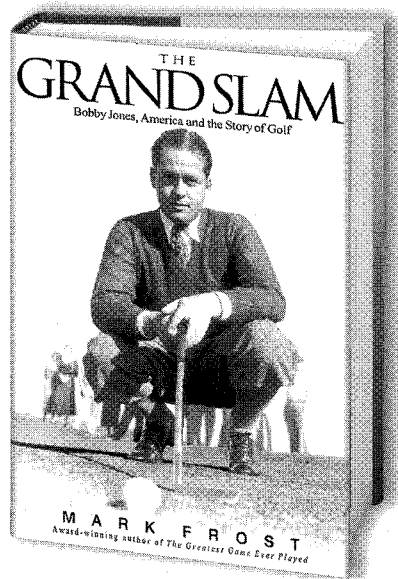


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SWANN

Dec. 9 at 10:30 A.M.: A sale of maps and atlases, along with a selection of natural-history and historical prints. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

NEW YORK ARMORY

ANTIQUES & DESIGN SHOW

The Wendy firm presents a cavalcade of art works, furniture, jewelry, rugs, and decorations, just in time for the holidays. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 212-472-1180. Dec. 9-12.)



*Merkin Concert Hall hosts a concert of
music by Annie Gosfield on December 9.*

CLASSICAL MUSIC OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

Dec. 8 at 7:30: The final performance this season of "Aida," featuring Norma Fantini (in the title role), Irina Mishura, Franco Farina, Mark Rucker (as Amonasro, in his debut), and Kwangchul Youn; Gareth Morrell conducts. ♦ Dec. 9 and Dec. 14 at 7:30: Otto Schenk's production of Wagner's "Ring" was conservative to the point of parody, but for the earlier and more restrained opera "Tannhäuser," a faintly historical tale of thirteenth-century minnesingers, his stately touch is perfect. (Günther Schneider-Siemssen's Romanesque Hall of the Minstrels, complete with imitation frescoes, deservedly wins applause.) This revival, however, is most importantly a chance to hear two outstanding American singers—Deborah Voigt, whose soprano has rarely had such freshness and gleam, singing the role of Elisabeth, and the baritone Thomas Hampson, who brings a melting lyricism to Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Song to the Evening Star"; the German heldentenor Peter Seiffert, making a belated debut in the title role, sings with plenty of power and a natural sense of line. The conductor Mark Elder's steady hand might temper the passions of the "Venusberg" scene, but Wagner's vivid orchestral contrasts emerge with clarity. ♦ Dec. 10 at 8 and Dec. 13 at 7:30: The season's first performances of Offenbach's "Les Contes d'Hoffmann," with Ramón Vargas (in the title role), Aleksandra Kurzak (in her debut, as Olympia), Hei-Kyung Hong, Béatrice Uria-Monzon, Ruxandra Donose, James Morris, and Jean-Paul Fouchécourt; Frédéric Chaslin conducts. ♦ Dec. 11 at 1:30: Verdi's "I Vespri Sici-

liani," with Sondra Radvanonsky, Francisco Casanova, Leo Nucci, and Samuel Ramey; Chaslin. (This is the final performance.) ♦ Dec. 11 at 8: Handel's "Rodelinda," featuring a cast headed by Renée Fleming, Stephanie Blythe, David Daniels, Bejun Mehta, Kobie van Rensburg, and John Relyea. The orchestra, flush with Baroque instruments and performing in a specially raised pit, is led by Harry Bicket; the director is Stephen Wadsworth. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

OPERA THEATRE

Lee Hoiby's neo-Romantic opera "A Month in the Country," based on the Turgenev play, earned rave reviews after its premiere by New York City Opera, in 1964, but has rarely been heard since. Ned Canty directs this revival, conducted by Steven Osgood. (Borden Auditorium, Broadway at 122nd St. 917-493-4428. Dec. 8 and Dec. 10 at 8 and Dec. 12 at 12:30.)

JUILLIARD OPERA THEATRE

Yves Abel, one of the more stylish Francophone conductors around, leads a double bill of Ravel's "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges" and Debussy's "L'Enfant Prodigue"; Lillian Groag directs. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 212-721-6500. Dec. 8 and Dec. 10 at 8 and Dec. 12 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Colin Davis begins a two-week residency with the Philharmonic conducting tone poems by Sibelius ("En Saga") and Janáček ("Taras Bulba"), along with Elgar's Violin Concerto (with Hilary Hahn). (Dec. 9 at 7:30 and Dec. 11 at 8.) ♦ The mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson joins Davis and the orchestra for the first of four performances of Britten's "Phaedra," a "rush-hour" concert that also features Haydn's Symphony No. 103, "Drum-roll" (see This Week). (Dec. 14 at 6:45.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S

David Zinman conducts an Austro-Polish program with the chamber orchestra featuring not only works by Mozart (including the Symphony No. 36, "Linz") but also by Górecki ("Three Pieces in Old Style") and Lutoslawski ("Chantefleurs et Chantefables," with the soprano Dawn Upshaw, the radiant voice behind Zinman's smash-hit recording of Górecki's Symphony No. 3). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Dec. 9 at 8.)

JUILLIARD SYMPHONY

JoAnn Falletta conducts the orchestra in music by Walton, Bartók, and Berlioz (the "Symphonie Fantastique"). (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 9 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-769-7406.)

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

A Christmas program, conducted by Clara Longstreth, mixes works by Bach and Schein with music by such accessible Americans as Katherine Hoover, Daniel Pinkham, and Kirke Mechem (the New York premiere of his Missa Brevis). (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Lexington Ave. at 88th St. 212-842-1511. Dec. 10 at 8 and Dec. 12 at 4.)

TRINITY CHOR AND REBEL BAROQUE ORCHESTRA: "MESSIAH"

For those who prefer their Handel by daylight, Trinity Church's excellent choir, accompanied by the crack Baroque band, offers a free performance of Part I, the work's "Christmas" section. Owen Burdick conducts. (Broadway at Wall St. Dec. 13 at 1. No tickets required.)

ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The violinist Pinchas Zukerman plays with and conducts the ensemble in a benefit concert that features two young pianists, Benjamin Hochman and Jonathan Gilad, playing Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos, K. 365, along with a performance of Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 (the "Italian"). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Dec. 13 at 7.)

ORCHESTRA OF THE S.E.M. ENSEMBLE

Petr Kotik's avant-garde group, along with the young experimental rock band Zs, offers works by Kotik and Phil Niblock. (Paula Cooper Gallery, 534 W. 21st St. 718-488-7659. Dec. 14 at 8.)

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

RECITALS

"FLYING TREMOLOS, WILD PITCHES, COPPER PIPES AND BOOMING ECHOES"

Annie Gosfield, a star of the downtown scene, has a new album out on John Zorn's Tzadik label, and Merkin Concert Hall is hosting an evening of her electronically powered chamber music, which combines acoustic sonorities with sounds from such "non-musical" sources as warped 78 records, "de-tuned" radios, and beaten-up pianos. The pianist Andrew Russo, the FLUX Quartet, and the ensemble So Percussion, among others, perform a program featuring several premières; John Schaefer hosts. (129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Dec. 9 at 8.)

DAEDALUS QUARTET

A divertimento-like spirit flits through this modern but accessible program from the noted young ensemble, who play Beethoven's "Harp" Quartet and Haydn's Quartet, Op. 20, No. 1 (both in E-Flat Major), along with Elliott Carter's String Quartet No. 5. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Dec. 10 at 7:30.)

MARY NESSINGER AND MARILYN NONKEN

Nessinger lends her velvety mezzo-soprano voice to George Crumb's "Apparition" (a magnificent Walt Whitman setting) along with works by Eric Moe ("Siren Songs") and Jason Eckardt; Nonken, an intrepid new-music pianist, accompanies her. (Elebash Hall, CUNY Graduate Center, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. Dec. 10 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

MUSIC AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Dec. 10 at 8: The Beaux Arts Trio continues the first year of its three-year Beethoven series with performances of such works as the Piano Trio No. 1 in E-Flat Major and the Violin Sonata in C Minor, Op. 30, No. 2. ♦ Dec. 11 at 8: The Guarneri String Quartet teams up with its former cellist, David Soyer, and the violist Ida Kavafian for music by

Mozart, Ullmann, and Dvořák (the String Sextet in A Major). (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 212-570-3949.)

BARGEMUSIC

Dec. 9-10 at 7:30: The pianist Inna Faliks plays music by Chopin, Schumann (the "Symphonic Études"), and Brahms (the Sonata in F Minor). ♦ Dec. 11 at 7:30 and Dec. 12 at 4: Some of the city's more eminent string players (including the violist Samuel Rhodes and the cellist Marcy Rosen) offer a serious program of Mozart (the String Quartet in D Minor, K. 421), Schoenberg (the String Trio), and more Schumann (the Quartet No. 1 in A Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

THE SCHNEIDER CONCERTS:

MUSICIANS FROM MARLBORO

The low-cost concert series, devoted to presenting outstanding young musicians, hosts the reliably first-rate touring group from the country's greatest chamber-music festival, who perform works by Bach, Kurtág, and Brahms (the String Sextet No. 2 in G Major). (Tishman Auditorium, New School, 66 W. 12th St. 212-243-9937. Dec. 12 at 2.)

"ON WINGS OF SONG" SERIES

Two promising young singers—the soprano Barbara Quintiliani and the mezzo-soprano Keri Alkema—perform songs by Chausson, Monteverdi, Jake Heggie, and others in the Marilyn Horne Foundation's latest concert; Craig Terry accompanies them. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 51st St. 212-378-0248. Dec. 12 at 3.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS

Two special guests—the pianist Ruth Laredo and the violinist Stefan Milenkovich—join the Players in music by Beethoven (the String Trio in C Minor), Spohr, and Mozart (the "Prague" Symphony, in Hummel's chamber arrangement). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church. 212-799-1259. Dec. 13 at 2 and 7:30.)

SPECULUM MUSICAE

The formidable new-music group celebrates George Crumb's seventy-fifth birthday. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Dec. 13 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS

Dec. 9 at 7: A reading from "The Best American Poetry 2004," with Fanny Howe, Billy Collins, Jeni Olin, Mark Bibbins, and other contributors. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. For more information, call 212-229-5611.) ♦ Dec. 10 at 7:30: The German writer and filmmaker Alexander Kluge reads from his newly published short-story collection, "The Devil's Blind Spot," and talks with the Romanian-born novelist Norman Manea. (Goethe-Institut, 1014 Fifth Ave., between 82nd and 83rd Sts. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Dec. 13 at 8: Tom Wolfe offers selections from his new novel, "I Am Charlotte Simmons." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.) ♦ Dec. 14 at 6:30: A night of contemporary Mexican poetry written in indigenous languages, with the Mayan poet Briceida Cuevas Cob, the Mazatec poet Juan Gregorio Regino, and the Zapotec poet Natalia Toledo. The poems will also be read in Spanish, by Mónica de la Torre, and in English, by Eliot Weinberger. (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3587.)

TALKS

Dec. 8 at 7: The artists Mark Bradford and Jennie C. Jones join the poet Sean Singer and the curator Franklin Sirmans for a discussion about mid-century jazz and Romare Bearden. (Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. 212-570-7710.) ♦ Dec. 9 at 6: Glenn D. Lowry, the director of the Museum of Modern Art, considers MOMA's future. (11 W. 53rd St. 212-708-9781.) ♦ Dec. 14 at 7: Philip Gfeller, a senior picture editor at the *Times*, moderates a discussion about the work of the late photographer Richard Avedon with the critics Vince Aletti and Holly Brubach, the curator Eva Respini, and Mary Shanahan, the creative director of *Town & Country*. (School of Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. No tickets necessary.)

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MOVIES OPENING

BLADE: TRINITY

Wesley Snipes returns for a third round of vampire hunting, in an action movie written and directed by David S. Goyer. With Jessica Biel and Ryan Reynolds. Opening Dec. 8.

BORN INTO BROTHELS

A documentary about the children who live in Calcutta's red-light district. Directed by Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman. Opening Dec. 8. (Film Forum.)

THE LIFE AQUATIC WITH STEVE ZISSOU

Wes Anderson's new film tells the story of an ocean explorer (Bill Murray) who leads a motley crew in pursuit of the fabled jaguar shark. With Cate Blanchett, Owen Wilson, Willem Dafoe, Jeff Goldblum, and Anjelica Huston. Opening Dec. 10.

OCEAN'S TWELVE

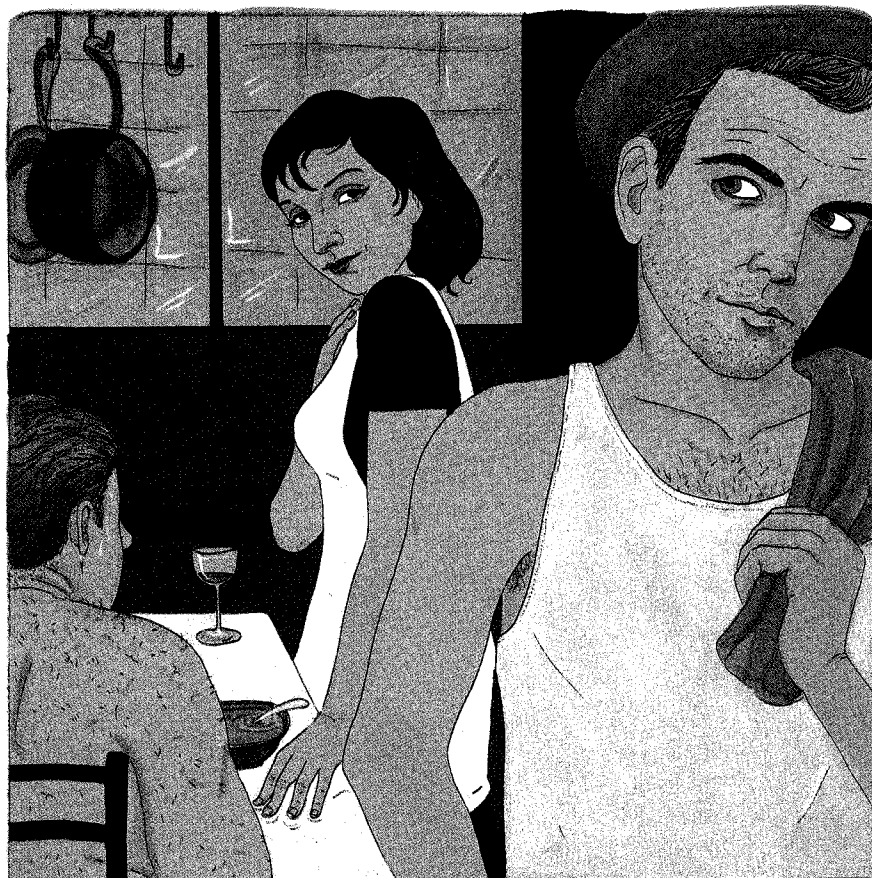
A sequel directed by Steven Soderbergh, in which Danny Ocean (George Clooney) reassembles his team of criminals for a heist in Europe. The cast includes Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, Catherine Zeta-Jones, and Bernie Mac. Opening Dec. 10.

OTHER PEOPLE'S PICTURES

Lorca Shepperd and Cabot Philbrick directed this documentary about people at the Chelsea flea market who collect amateur snapshots. Opening Dec. 8. (Pioneer Theatre.)



But the boys were only eleven, and the affair was broken up by a priest and schoolmaster named Manolo. The priest, however, wasn't simply enforcing the rules. Father Manolo had already laid hands on Ignacio, a sweet-faced choirboy, and he wanted him entirely for himself. Pedro Almodóvar's extraordinary new movie, which is both a summary of his career and a deepening of his recent style, opens sixteen years after the affair, in 1980. Ignacio (Gael García Bernal), now a young



At BAM Rose Cinemas, Luchino Visconti's debut film, "Ossessione," from 1942.

A TALKING PICTURE

Manoel de Oliveira's drama about a history professor (Leonor Silveira) who takes her daughter on a cruise to visit ancient ruins. With John Malkovich and Catherine Deneuve. In Portuguese. Opening Dec. 10. (Anthology Film Archives.)

FILM NOTES

BAD EDUCATION

In an obscure parochial school in rural Spain, two young boys, Ignacio and Enrique, fell in love.

actor, brings a manuscript to Enrique (Fele Martínez), who has become a well-known movie director in Madrid. The manuscript chronicles the boys' friendship and what happened to Ignacio—he became a drag queen and a blackmailer. We see the story enacted; later, Enrique turns it into a movie, and we see that being filmed, too, at which point the priest, now an ex-priest, shows up, and we hear his version of the events. The truth of what happened to the grownup Ignacio and Enrique emerges in pieces: the three narratives, as they expand and correct one another, become a trio of mirrors producing endless off-angle reflections. The movie asks: Is love possible between

men, or is it possible only between innocent boys? In Spanish.—David Denby (Reviewed in our issue of 11/22/04.) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

CLOSER

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Battery Park 11, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

FINDING NEVERLAND

Marc Forster, the director who brought us "Monster's Ball," has turned his attention—as one does—from Halle Berry to J. M. Barrie. The diminutive Scottish author is played by Johnny Depp, in a loose fantasia on the genesis of "Peter Pan." Barrie meets some young boys in a London park, and from his friendship with them and their widowed mother (Kate Winslet) he conjures a story of a child who cannot, or will not, grow up. The fact that the film takes liberties with the historical record (there were five brothers, for instance, not four) is a minor affair; more misguided is the reliance on whimsy, at moments where the real Barrie was straightforward, even chilly, in his imaginings. At other times, however, the movie's air of slightness and evanescence feels touching and right, and, if the result strikes you as too weepy for its own good, consider that the actual story of Barrie and his "Lost Boys"—some of whom met untimely deaths—was worse and more troubling by far. With Julie Christie, Dustin Hoffman, and, in the role of a real Peter, the clear and unsentimental Freddie Highmore.—Anthony Lane (Battery Park 11, Cinema 1, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 72nd Street East, and Union Square.)

THE INCREDIBLES

A shiny new project from Pixar, sprinting in the footsteps of "Toy Story," Bob and Helen Parr are retired superheroes, raising their suspiciously gifted children in the suburbs. Bob, stuck in an office job, is lured back into the fray; being a lunk, he stumbles into a trap, and Helen, being a wife, has the guts and initiative to set out and rescue him. The movie, written and directed by Brad Bird, is a smart compound of shameless visual exaggeration (Bob's muscle tone alone is a special effect) and a touchingly unhip reliance on emotional realism. Instead of giggling references to other movies, we get snatches of ordinary family bickering, plus a distinct air of nineteen-fifties innocence—quite a fillip, given that many computer-animated movies pride themselves on technological progress and nothing else. The main voice-overs are delivered by Craig T. Nelson, Samuel L. Jackson, and—most winning of all—Holly Hunter.—A.L. (11/15/04) (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

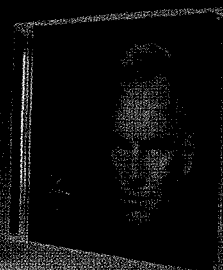
KINSEY

Liam Neeson, his hair standing straight up like tensed wire, is the dauntless but neurotic sex researcher Alfred C. Kinsey in this vivacious and witty—even naughty—bio-pic, written and directed by Bill Condon. The movie covers Kinsey's entire adult life (with flashbacks to his boyhood), including his marriage to Clara McMillen (Laura Linney) and his relations with the much younger men—Clyde Martin (Peter Sarsgaard), Wardell Pomeroy (Chris O'Donnell), and Paul Gebhardt (Timothy Hutton)—who became, at Indiana University in the forties and fifties, the principal assistants on Kinsey's revolutionary books about male and female sexuality. At the movie's heart is a surprisingly entertaining sequence devoted to the team's interviewing technique, a method of nonjudgmental inquiry that causes hundreds of thousands of subjects to open up and confess, with the result that behavior that had been isolated in the past as "deviant" or "perverted" came to seem like relatively common occurrences on the spectrum of human sexuality. Eager to sympathize and understand everyone, Kinsey the liberator plunges into gay bars, homosexual relationships, and once-a-philosopher-twice-a-

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pervert masochistic practices. Condon presents him as a genuine hero who drove himself into semi-madness and exhaustion, a sacrificial figure who died for our pleasure.—D.D. (11/29/04) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES

In 1952, a medical student called Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (Gael García Bernal) teamed up with his friend Alberto Granado (Rodrigo de la Serna), a biochemist, and journeyed eight thousand miles through South America. The tale of their travels is the basis for Walter Salles's ravishing, suggestive, and faintly superfluous film. Both young men are of middle-class Argentinean stock, and Ernesto has a girlfriend so rich and beautiful that her family's estate, as Alberto notes, looks like Switzerland. If he had stayed with her, Latin-American history might have taken a more placid turn; instead, Ernesto remounted his motorbike, headed into the Andes, and began the determined process of turning into Che Guevara. The film is sprinkled with gestures toward that future, especially when the two men work at a leper colony on the Amazon, but the foreshadowing doesn't always convince; the sequence in which they meet a pair of wandering Communists on the road and drink in the saga of their suffering is biographically accurate, yet it feels dramatically forced. In the end, the film might best be read as a high-class, episodic buddy picture, with the tubby, more skeptical Alberto (he's like a young Robert Donat) observing with interest the spark of indignation—and the air of chaste reticence—in his impossibly handsome pal.—A.L. (9/27/04) (Empire 25, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)

NATIONAL TREASURE

A somewhat entertaining treasure-hunt movie—suspension of disbelief required. Nicolas Cage stars as an explorer out to find some buried riches left behind by the Founding Fathers. The would-be crackling dialogue is damply delivered, but there's fun to be had in the director Jon Turteltaub's constantly shifting monument locations (from Washington, D.C., to Philadelphia) and the puzzle-work clues that move the plot.—Bruce Diones (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

NOTRE MUSIQUE

Jean-Luc Godard, ever ready to follow a noble example, has modelled the structure of his new film—part drama, part documentary, though not a drama-documentary—on Dante. The first section, entitled "Hell," is a mashing-together of violence, shuffling clips of actual war into snatches of war movies; one longs to know how, or whether, Godard distinguishes between them, given that so much of his youthful work paid homage to Hollywood genres. The second, purgatorial part is the meat of the movie, following Godard himself around a shrouded Sarajevo, where he lectures on subjects dear to him—including the vision of Bernadette, no less—and where a young Israeli woman (played by Sarah Adler) with a story to tell tracks down the French ambassador. Last and harshest is the advent of heaven—a kitschy but placid paradise beside a lake, guarded by an American marine. The director's rage against conflict is hardly new, but none the less impassioned for that, and, despite the occasional false note (the intrusion of American Indians is too gauche to have the desired political effect), there are passages of autumnal sublimity that nobody but Godard could achieve. The soundtrack alone, the trove of a musical magpie, is worth a ticket. In French.—A.L. (Film Forum.)

OSSESSIONE

In his 1942 debut film, Luchino Visconti takes James M. Cain's novel "The Postman Always Rings Twice," a story of adultery (between a drifter and a roadhouse owner's wife) and murder (of the husband, naturally), drops it into the Po delta, and suffuses it with a melancholy visual poetry. From the start, Visconti was a master of sexy, languorous gestures (and equally sultry camera movements). And in Massimo Girotti and Clara Calamai he had the actors to give those gestures life. In Italian.—Michael Sragow (BAM Rose Cinemas; Dec. 8.)

THE POLAR EXPRESS

Chris Van Allsburg's twenty-nine-page picture book about a young boy's travels to the North Pole to meet Santa Claus gets an expanded, expensive retelling in Robert Zemeckis's Christmas bauble. The film is a hybrid of sorts—a computer-animated movie filmed with live actors in a process called "performance capture." This technique makes for a gorgeous holiday card (the digital backgrounds twinkle and shine), but the look of the "captured" characters is something of a disappointment. Tom Hanks (in a number of roles) and the other actors do a nice job of voicing their parts, but the waxy animated faces they've been given are off-putting. It's a bit like watching mannequins act. (The movie is also playing in 3-D at selected IMAX theaters, where the wow quotient improves considerably.)—B.D. (Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

RAY

Swaying from side to side, his back arched almost to the point of snapping, Jamie Foxx, as Ray Charles, seems pulled upward to the heavens and downward to the keys at the same time. This intelligent and tough-minded bio-pic, written by James L. White and Taylor Hackford and directed by Hackford, tells us a lot about Charles, but it doesn't tell us everything. Though properly awed by Charles's talent, "Ray" refuses to get chummy or possessive. The movie picks up Charles's story in the late forties, when he's an ambitious but wary teen-age musician, and carries him through his musical innovations and his personal pleasures and torments until 1964, when he's a world-famous artist and a miserable heroin addict. There's something both joyous and demonic about this guy, an insatiable energy in his insistence on driving soul and country sounds into the beats of R. & B. For many older people in the audience, the sound of Ray Charles's music is inseparable from memories of dating, dancing, lovemaking, and loss. The movie has the bold good grace to honor the enraptured kids they once were and the sterner but still hungry grownups they became.—D.D. (11/8/04) (Battery Park 11, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SIDEWAYS

Paul Giamatti has no chin to speak of, a round-shouldered physique, and the nervous smile of a craven dog. He's the anti-ideal of the American male, and he's making a brilliant career of it. In this wonderful movie by the team of Alexander Payne (writer-director) and Jim Taylor (co-writer), Giamatti plays Miles, a failed novelist around forty who takes off for a wine-tasting tour with his buddy Jack (Thomas Haden Church), a washed-up TV actor who is about to get married. What starts as a last fling at freedom becomes for the two men—but centrally for Miles—a confrontation with middle age and stasis. Miles is a bibliophile, a cinephile, and an oenophile. Jack, however, couldn't care less—in every way, he's blissfully undiscriminating. On the road, the men meet Maya (Virginia Madsen), a divorced graduate student who works as a waitress, and Stephanie (Sandra Oh), a sexy "pour girl." The music and the camera setups are at times pedestrian, but the rest of "Sideways" is vivid and bitterly funny.—D.D. (10/25/04) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE

Nickelodeon's smash cartoon series gets a splashy sendoff in its first feature film. SpongeBob, his dim-witted sidekick, Patrick, his employer, Mr. Krabs, and the other residents of the undersea community Bikini Bottom appear in vibrant color. The story line has SpongeBob passed over for a promotion, while King Neptune's crown (he wears it to hide his baldness) is stolen and Mr. Krabs is framed. As the squeaky-voiced hero sets out to right the wrongs, lessons are learned and audiences entertained. With some excellent musical moments (Wilco, the Flam-

ing Lips) that buoy the action.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 11, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THIS GUN FOR HIRE

A glossily amusing Paramount version of the Graham Greene spy-intrigue thriller "A Gun for Sale"; the film's sentimentality has a satisfying underlayer of perversity. Alan Ladd is the nervous, gentle, and sensitive gunman without a trace of human kindness; what heart he has he gives in the care of sad cats, mongrels, and such. Laird Cregar is the sinister, stout villain with fussy habits; the proprietor of a night club, he hires Veronica Lake to entertain the patrons. This was Lake's first big starring role, and she is the most stylized character of all. Her face is so impeccably blank that when she smiles, as she does perhaps twice in the film, hearts can be heard to break—smack—in the theatre. Released in 1942.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; Dec. 9.)

ALSO PLAYING

ALEXANDER (12/6/04)

Battery Park 11, Cinema 1, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.

DESERTED STATION

Quad Cinema.

GAME OVER: KASPAROV AND THE MACHINE

Cinema Village.

TARNATION (10/18/04)

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BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.

Battery Park 11, West St. at Vesey St.

Beckman, Second Ave. at 66th St.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.

Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.

Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).

East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.

84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.

Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.

(212-398-3939).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave.

(212-727-8110).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.

42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.

Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.

(212-757-2280).

Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.

Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.

New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.

19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.

Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.

Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).

Pioneer Theatre, 155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.

72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.

64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.

Sunshine Cinema, 143 E. Houston St.

(212-330-8182).

Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.

34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.

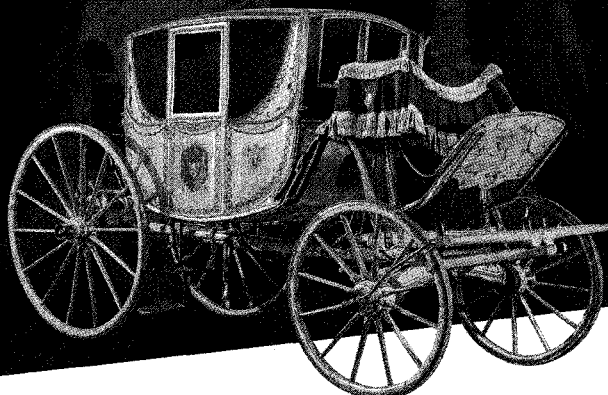
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.

Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.

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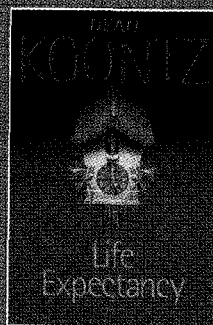
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Jimmy Tock knows, and now he has to live with it...

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WHAT GIVES? ROBOTS CAN DRIVE AROUND MARS BUT NOT ON EARTH



Giving the Mars Rover a run for its money. Millions of miles from Mars there's a vehicle with onboard sensors, diverse terrain ability, yet far more comfortable seating.

Helen Greiner's eleven-year-old crush was on a movie droid. She became the robot girl, ultimately starting her own robot company, iRobot, right out of MIT. Today, her robots swim like fish. Walk like crabs. Inspect caves in Afghanistan. Clear minefields. Climb walls. Roomba®, iRobot's vacuum cleaner, has even appeared on a sitcom.

At the top of iRobot's corporate mission statement: Build cool stuff. Robotic "stuff" has already leapt from the lab to the road in the Lincoln Navigator. Press its buttons and the Navigator comes alive. The liftgate opens and closes by remote. The third-row seats fold flat. Its side mirrors wiggle in and out. Running boards automatically extend and retract. The rear bumper sensors activate sonar to sense objects behind you. Its Navigation System maps GPS data and responds to 174 voice commands, speaking out directions turn-by-turn.*

Will robots someday move right into the driver's seat? Futurists say yes. But Ms. Greiner says, not so fast. "Myself, I love driving, so why would I want a robot driving my SUV for me? Unless, of course, it makes driving even more fun. Maybe someday we'll all be driving by thinking and pointing our eyes to steer.

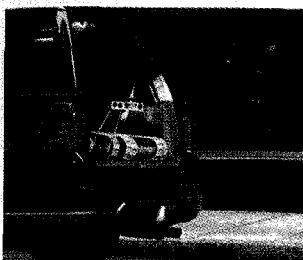
"Also in the future," she surmises, "ultra-wideband communications could allow your car to talk to other cars. Negotiate with them, even. 'Who takes the turn first? I'm cutting you off. No, you're not!' This could promote greater traffic efficiency." Letting cars handle road rage? Sounds like progress. But for now, civility can be savored in the luxurious cabin of the Navigator.

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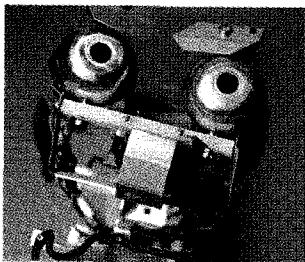


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A
Press a button and the Navigator's power liftgate opens and closes without human assistance.

>
Helen Greiner
Chairman and co-founder,
iRobot Corporation.

Helen's views on robots driving on Mars but not Earth?
"On Mars, there are no Boston drivers. So maybe it's an easier environment that way."



LINCOLN

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—
"Cinema Tropical." Dec. 10 at 7:30: "Mercano
the Martian" (2002, Juan Antin; in Spanish). ♦
Through Dec. 12: "Fort Lee: The Film Town."
Dec. 11 at 2: "Symbol of the Unconquered" (1920,
Oscar Micheaux). ♦ Dec. 11 at 4: "Paradise in

Dec. 9 at 1:05, 4:35, and 8:05: "The Maltese Falcon" (1941, John Huston). ♦ Dec. 9 at 3, 6:30,
and 10: "This Gun for Hire" (†). ♦ Dec. 10-11 at
1:20, 5:15, and 9:10: "The Postman Always
Rings Twice" (1946, Tay Garnett). ♦ Dec. 10-11
at 3:30 and 7:25: "The Lady from Shanghai"
(1948, Orson Welles). ♦ Dec. 12-13 at 1:20, 5:25,
and 9:30: "The Killers" (1946, Robert Siod-
mak). ♦ Dec. 12-13 at 3:25 and 7:30: "Gilda"
(1946, Charles Vidor). ♦ Dec. 14 at 1:20, 5:20,
and 9:20: "The Big Sleep" (1946, Howard
Hawks). ♦ Dec. 14 at 3:30 and 7:30: "Murder,
My Sweet" (1944, Edward Dmytryk).

Kuchar) and "The Meaning of the Buffalo" (2004,
Karin Slater). ♦ Dec. 13 at 8: "The Aviator" (2004,
Martin Scorsese). ♦ "112 Years of Cinema," one
film from each year of moving-image history. Dec.
8 at 6:15: "Phiff!t!" (1954, Mark Robson). ♦ Dec.
9 at 8:45: "Sugarland Express" (1974, Steven
Spielberg). ♦ Dec. 11 at 2:30: "Hymn to Her"
(1974, Stan Brakhage) and "The Learning Tree"
(1969, Gordon Parks). ♦ Dec. 12 at 2:30: "The
Battle of Midway" (1942, John Ford) and "The
Land" (1942, Robert and Frances Flaherty). ♦
Dec. 12 at 5: "Adua and Her Friends" (1960, An-
tonio Pietrangeli; in Italian).



At Film Forum, "Born Into Brothels," a documentary that grew out of Zana Briski's photographs, one of which is shown here, of Calcutta's red-light district. She gave cameras to several children, and, as the film reveals, taught them to capture their own lives.

Harlem" (1940, Joseph Siedon). ♦ Dec. 12 at
2: "Uncle Moses" (1932, Sidney Goldin). ♦ Dec.
12 at 4: "The Light Ahead" (1939, Edgar G.
Ulmer). ♦ Repertory nights. Dec. 11-12 at 6:30:
"In the Mood for Love" (2000, Wong Kar-wai;
in Cantonese).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—
Dec. 9-12: "JPEX: Japanese Experimental Film
and Video, 1955-Now." ♦ "Essential Cinema."
Dec. 9 at 8: "L'Atalante" (1934, Jean Vigo; in
French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—A
Luchino Visconti retrospective. Dec. 8 at 7:30:
"Ossessione" (†). ♦ Dec. 9 at 6:50 and 9:15: "The
Stranger" (1967). ♦ Dec. 10-11 at 3, 6, and 9:
"Death in Venice" (1971). ♦ Dec. 12 at 3, 6, and 9:
"L'Innocente" (1976). ♦ Dec. 13 at 6:50 and 9:15:
"We, the Women" (1953), "Il Lavoro" (1962),
and "The Witch Burned Alive" (1967). ♦ Dec. 14 at
4:30, 6:15, and 9:15: "Conversation Piece" (1974).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-
8110)—Through Dec. 23: "Essential Noir." Dec.
8 at 1:05, 4:35, and 8:05: "Kiss of Death" (1947,
Henry Hathaway). ♦ Dec. 8 at 3, 6:30, and 10:
"Pickup on South Street" (1953, Samuel Fuller). ♦

FLORENCE GOULD HALL

55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Dec.
21: "Sisters: Dorléac and Deneuve." Dec. 14 at
12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Mississippi Mermaid"
(1969, François Truffaut; in French).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St.
(212-708-9480)—Through Jan. 31: "Premières,"
new films and recent restorations. Dec. 8 at 6:
New films by Ernie Gehr (2004). ♦ Dec. 8 at 8 and
8:30: "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou" (2004,
Wes Anderson). ♦ Dec. 9 at 6 and Dec. 11 at 5:
Three films by Nathaniel Dorsky (1976-2002). ♦
Dec. 9 at 8: "The Blind Director" (1985, Alexander
Kluge; in German), introduced by the direc-
tor. ♦ Dec. 10 at 5: "Le Grand Littoral" (2003,
Valérie Jouve) and three other shorts. ♦ Dec. 10
at 6: "High Hill" (2003, Choiha Dongha; in
Korean). ♦ Dec. 10 at 7:30: "T.S.H." (2004, Jesse
Lerner) and five other shorts. ♦ Dec. 10 at 8 and
Dec. 12 at 2: "Mondovino" (2004, Jonathan Nos-
siter). ♦ Dec. 11 at 2: "La Chambre des Magici-
ennes" (2000, Claude Miller; in French). ♦ Dec. 11
at 7:30 and Dec. 13 at 5: "Proteus: A Nineteenth-
Century Vision" (2004, David Lebrun). ♦ Dec. 11
at 8: "Nausea II" (2004, Guy Richards Smit). ♦
Dec. 12 at 4:30: "Top Spot" (2004, Tracey
Emin). ♦ Dec. 13 at 6: "SuperCell" (2004, George

SUNSHINE CINEMA

143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight mov-
ies. Dec. 10-11: "Bad Santa" (2003, Terry Zwigoff).

THALIA THEATRE

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-
5400)—Dec. 12 at 2 and Dec. 14 at 6: "Tarna-
tion" (2004, Jonathan Caouette). ♦ Dec. 12 at 4
and Dec. 14 at 8: "La Dolce Vita" (1960, Federico
Fellini; in Italian).

WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Starting Dec. 8:
"Spanish Cinema Now." Dec. 8 at 2: "That Happy
Couple" (1951, Juan Antonio Bardem and Luis G.
Berlanga). ♦ Dec. 8 at 4:15, Dec. 12 at 6:30, and
Dec. 13 at 2 and 6:15: "Tuna and Chocolate"
(2004, Pablo Carbonell). ♦ Dec. 8 at 7 and Dec. 11
at 9: "Take My Eyes" (2003, Iciar Bollain). ♦ Dec.
9 at 1 and Dec. 11 at 4:15: "Summer Clouds"
(2004, Felipe Varga). ♦ Dec. 9 at 3: "Life Goes
On" (1963, Fernando Fernán-Gómez). ♦ Dec. 10 at
2 and 6:15: "The Strange Trip" (1964-69, Fernán-
Gómez). ♦ Dec. 10 at 4 and 8:15, Dec. 11 at 2:15,
and Dec. 12 at 4:15 and 8:40: "Astronauts" (2004,
Santi Amodeo). ♦ Dec. 11 at 6:30, Dec. 12 at 2, and
Dec. 13 at 4: "Héctor" (2003, Gracia Querejeta). ♦
Dec. 13 at 8:15 and Dec. 14 at 1: "Basque Ball"
(2004, Julio Medem). ♦ Dec. 14 at 3:20: "Hotel
Danubio" (2003, Antonio Giménez-Rico).

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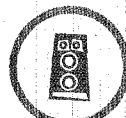
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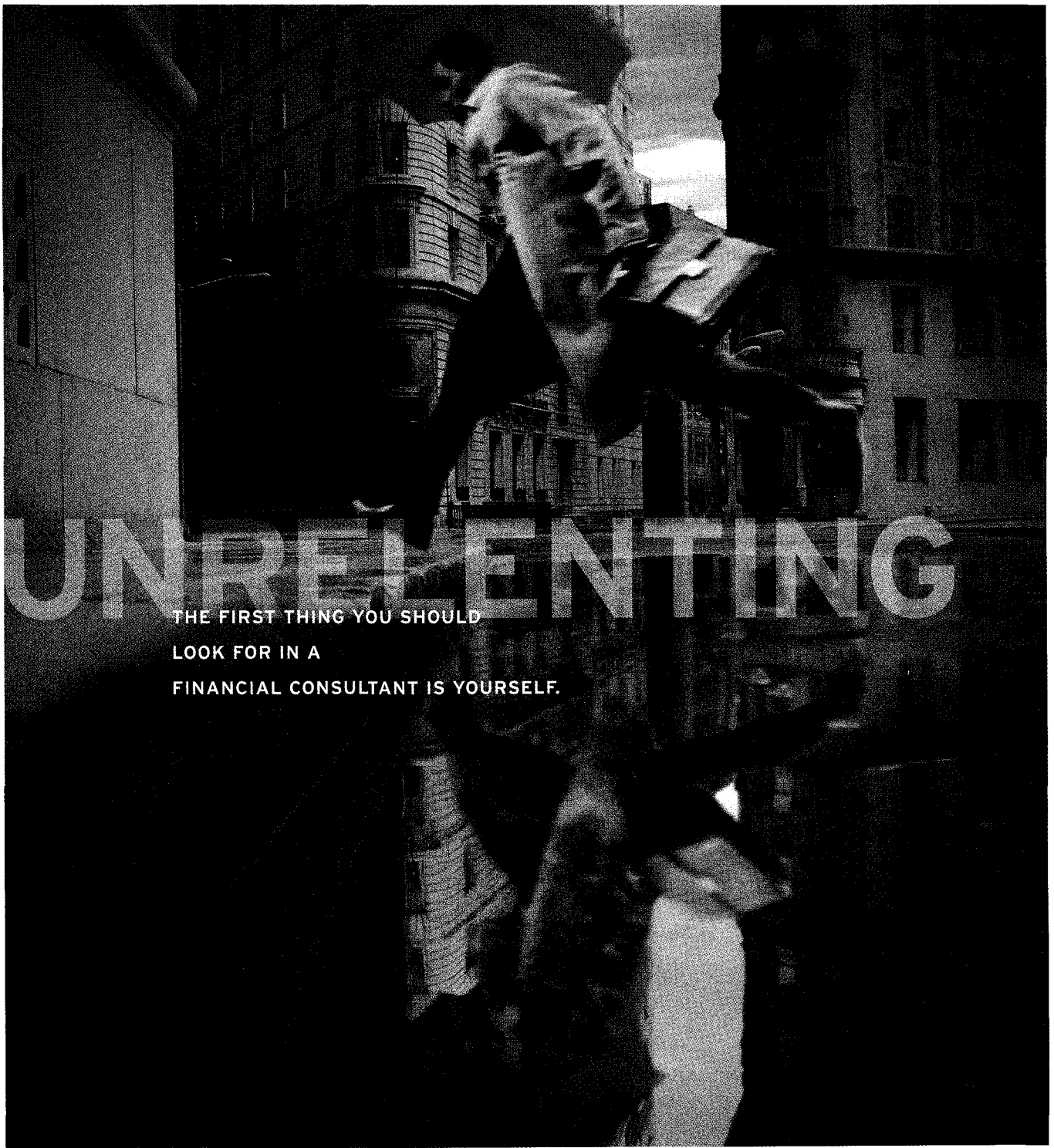
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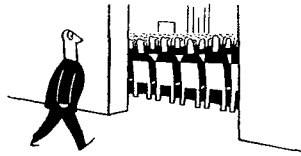
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT POWER PLAYS



The air of corruption that clouds the United Nations these days cannot simply be fanned away by forcing the resignation of Kofi Annan as Secretary-General, as a growing number of prominent Republicans have been urging. Their pretext is the accumulating allegations of complicity of U.N. officials in scams that transformed the oil-for-food program in Saddam Hussein's Iraq into a racketeering enterprise whose single greatest beneficiary—to the tune of twenty billion dollars—was the tyrant himself. Last week, Annan was obliged to admit that his son Kojo had “disappointed” him by taking payments from a Swiss firm that the U.N. had hired to monitor Iraq's imports while under U.N. sanctions. And the Secretary-General has also been called on to answer complaints of widespread sexual abuse by U.N. peacekeepers in the field and accusations from the U.N. employees' union of a lackadaisical attitude toward sexual harassment by U.N. officials.

Annan bristles at the insinuations of corruption in his ranks, but, in truth, his tenure was tainted from the beginning. In the mid-nineties, when he was head of peacekeeping, he presided over catastrophically failed missions in Bosnia and in Rwanda, where he ignored detailed

warnings of genocide, then watched them come true, while the world did nothing to stop it. Those world leaders who later hailed him as a moral exemplar at best ignored that history, at worst regarded it as a kind of credential: since Annan was a compromised figure, they did not have to fear his censure. In theory, Annan's departure at this point could create an opportunity for institutional revival. But the pervasive suspicion at U.N. headquarters is that President Bush, who flaunted his contempt for the Geneva convention by nominating as his attorney general the lawyer he employed to find a legal justification for torture, is looking not to revive the world body but to retire it.

In Nova Scotia last week, Bush announced that “building effective multinational and multilateral institutions, and supporting effective multilateral action”

would be the foremost foreign-policy goals of his second term. But the olive branch he held out to the Canadians and the rest of America's erstwhile allies was purely rhetorical. The President made it clear that he still believes that other countries should multilaterally fall in line behind his unilateral decisions. In his view, America didn't fail to win the U.N.'s support for the war in Iraq; the U.N. failed to support America. And just as Annan calls the war illegal, Bush calls the U.N.'s withholding of support a refusal to enforce the law of its anti-Saddam resolutions.

In this respect, the oil-for-food scandal, in which French and Russian notables (as well as some Texans) are also allegedly implicated, serves the Administration's defensive assault on the U.N. Never mind that Saddam had no weapons of mass destruction and posed no threat to us; while Bush was in Nova Scotia, Norm Coleman, Republican of Minnesota, who is in charge of a Senate investigation into the oil-for-food program, called for Annan's resignation in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, arguing, essentially, that it had been necessary to go to war in Iraq simply to bring an end to the U.N.'s role as Saddam's enabler. (The war, it now seems, was neither preemptive nor preventive but punitive, and Annan was among those who needed punishing.) Annan has appointed an independent investigator—the former Federal Reserve chief Paul Volcker—but the more the Bush Administration guns for him the more the rest of the U.N.'s member states rally to his side.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

It is worth remembering that Annan owes his position as Secretary-General to a similar White House power play. In 1996, the Clinton Administration, tired of resistance from Annan's predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, maneuvered Annan into the job because, as the first career U.N. bureaucrat ever to rise to the top of the organization, he was assumed to be a company man, not a maverick. That assumption was not wholly mistaken. It took the Bush Administration's radical hostility to international law and diplomacy to spark an equal animosity in Annan, whose distaste for the continuously escalating war in Iraq is, of course, shared by a majority of the U.N.'s members. Such is the grim state of the international divide: the sole superpower has alienated itself from the rest of the world and made the need for a functional U.N. more apparent than ever, even as the U.N.'s authority has been undermined by the same sort of insularity and lack of accountability that has diminished America's standing as a world leader.

Last week, Annan released a set of proposals, put forward by a commission of senior international statesmen, for a systematic overhaul of the U.N. bureaucracy and an updating of international law—a blueprint for adapting the organization to the new century. The document stirred excitement in U.N. circles, not only because it sharply reproved the Bush Administration's unilateral use of force but also because it raised the possibility of expanding the Security Council, from fifteen seats to twenty-four, and endorsed redefining the limits of national sovereignty

to make international intervention legal in instances of genocide—"the Rwanda never again clause," a British diplomat called it. Yet nothing in the proposals promises to alter the chronic dysfunctions of the system. The proposed new permanent seats on the Security Council don't carry the power of veto that gave the victorious Allies of the Second World War the exclusive clout they still enjoy. And the U.N.'s withdrawal from Rwanda during the slaughter was due not to insufficient laws but to a complete lack of will among the member states to deal with it. No law can change that. No reform can create a community of nations where none exists.

Just before Thanksgiving, John Danforth, the United States Ambassador to the U.N., expressed his frustration with the organization, but he didn't talk about Iraq, or oil-for-food, or Security Council politics, or the deployment of force, or institutional reform. Instead, he lamented the General Assembly's refusal to condemn abuses against the people of the Darfur region of Sudan, where the Bush Administration has determined that genocide is under way. Nobody in the hall wanted to be bothered, and Danforth asked, "Why have this building? What is it all about?" As it happened, Danforth, who has served only six months at the U.N., had sent his letter of resignation to the White House the day before, and his blunt outburst suggested that he knew the answers to his questions all too well. We have the U.N. and keep trying to make it work because we would be even worse off without it.

—Philip Gourevitch

LOAVES AND FISHES BIG WINNER



Thanksgiving passes—we fatten up. Christmas-in-the-City officially begins. The holiday parties are under way, so there's your eggnog, your winter spirits. But what of the spiritual element?

Radio City's got it. The Christmas Spectacular, that perennial revue, has been revamped in recent years. Santa not only rides in an animated 3-D sleigh but checks his e-mail. Al Roker, appearing in a video montage with the usual array of local weathermen, looks positively slender—the result of gastric-bypass surgery. But, midway through the second act, there's still that whiff of live camel, foreshadowing the dramatic reproduction of ancient Bethlehem. The Living Nativity scene, a theatrical tradition introduced eight centuries ago, remains unchanged as the show's slightly incongruous finale.

"From the Scriptures of Isaiah comes this interpretation of the greatest of stories," a voice booms. And then up on the stage, where just moments earlier the Rockettes had been flashing their legs, there appears an elaborate crèche. Last week, during a matinée, this was the cue for young children to get restless, and for tourists to activate their cameras. And, perhaps, for a tired New Yorker, mesmerized by the strobelike effect of all those flashes, to daydream.

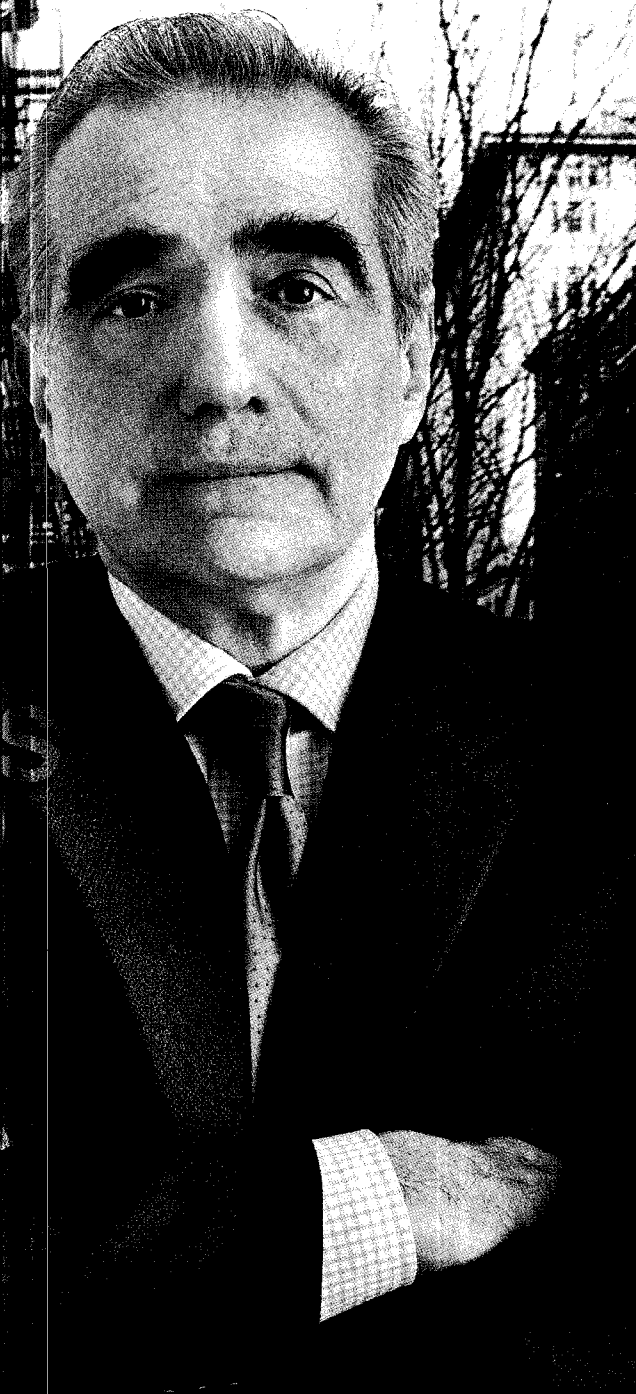
Soon a folk poem, known as "One Solitary Life," was being solemnly read aloud. (Radio City attributes its authorship to no one, but the words were originally composed by Dr. James Allan Francis, a Baptist minister, in 1926.) "He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman," it begins. "He never had a family or owned a home. He never set foot inside a big city. . . . He never wrote a book, or held an office. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. . . . His friends deserted Him."

The recitation is supposed to be an uplifting part of the program in which, as the show's executive producer, John Bonanni, said the other day, "you take



"When times were good, I trickled stuff down."

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a moment and look at one another and acknowledge the good in each other." But the daydreamer might imagine an extended sequence of negations: "He never had a date. He rarely got out of bed, except to eat. He ended up fat, on reality television." The modern cynic's word for such a man is, of course, "loser."

At about the same time the next day, over on Forty-second Street, an unusual line formed several hundred deep outside the B. B. King Blues Club & Grill. A charitable guess, in keeping with the season and the uniform body types, would have figured the scene for a Santa Claus audition. On closer inspection, however, there were as many women as men. Most of them held pieces of paper that read, across the top, "The Biggest Loser"—the name of NBC's new bottom-brow reality show, which was conceived as a weight-loss competition and also, arguably, as a salvation parable. The masses had assembled to audition for season No. 2.

Certainly everyone seemed jolly enough, despite the snickering pedestrians. Sixty-second interviews were conducted downstairs, nine or ten people at a time, in the club's restaurant. Strategies varied widely. Some aspiring losers, such as Annette, tried full-throttle negativity: "I wanted to do standup comedy, and I found out I sucked and I had no talent. My mom booed me off the stage." Others practiced what might be called damning with faint pride. Denise: "Thank you for not calling me Dennis." Dan: "I'm twenty-five, I'm from Westchester, and I got my own place." (On that last score, apparently, he had one up on Jesus.)

"Everybody sort of has their sob story," one of the casting directors said.

Maybe so, but the message of "One Solitary Life," over at Radio City, is, ultimately, one of redemption: Jesus suffered but stayed true to himself and, in spite of all that losing, became "the central figure for much of the human race." That's pretty good.

Big Al, a former high-school football player and a onetime English teacher in Slovakia, was one of the "Loser" hopefuls. His suffering was deep: eight friends and family members have passed away in the past two years, including his wife. A different kind of solitary life.

"I've gained weight under the stress,"

he said during his interview. His moment of triumph came when he declared, "I eat in twelve languages." The other aspirants all laughed, with affection, and offered up a round of applause.

—Ben McGrath

OUGHTA BE A LAW DEPT. GOOD FOR THE GOOSE



Advocates of animal rights, addressing the practice of overfeeding ducks and geese to fatten up their livers for foie gras, have for many years had a kind of exclusive hold on the literature of shock. It is a measure of how much ground they've gained lately that the food world has begun to decry their methods with imitative tones of outrage and despair. Take the current edition of *The Rosengarten Report*, a newsletter published by the Food Network personality David Rosengarten, where the issue is not how much ducks should be made to eat but how much duck should be eaten. In an article titled "Foiegracalypse Now!" Rosengarten bemoans "the end of foie gras as we know it," and urges gourmets to enjoy it while they can. (Inside: "Everything but the Quack: Great Ducky Products for Your Table.") He tells his readers that, all around the world, governments previously hospitable to foie gras—Israel (the world's third-largest producer), Hungary (its second), and even France itself (No. 1)—have charged the foie-gras-sie with finding a way to fatten the livers without what the French call *le gavage*. ("Doesn't that sound better?" he says.) Otherwise, they will have to give up the trade.

"It's impossible," says Michael Ginor, the co-founder of Hudson Valley Foie Gras, one of only two foie-gras farms in the United States. (The other is Sonoma Foie Gras, in the Central Valley.) "Foie gras has been produced for five thousand years using exactly the same mechanism." Besides, Ginor insists, the feeding method—by which roughly a pound of corn pellets are funnelled into each bird every day for a month—isn't painful, because ducks naturally swallow food whole. No matter. At the end of September, America got its first law legislat-

ing the dimensions of bird livers (not to be enlarged "beyond normal size") when California's governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, signed a bill banning the sale and production of foie gras in the state, effective July 1, 2012.

And so it was that some weeks ago Farm Sanctuary, an animal-rescue organization, threw a victory party at the House of Blues in Los Angeles. James Cromwell, who played the craggy-faced farmer in "Babe," arrived early, in a loose gray linen jacket, and began arranging a plate of crackers for the "faux gras"—tofu, seitan, lentils, agar-agar (dissolved in vegan vegetable stock). "My father was a horseman," Cromwell said. "He was a director and used to play polo with Will Rogers. As a kid, I never gave animals a second thought." But in 1994 he adopted a goat named Spike at Farm Sanctuary, and the following year "Babe" came out, transforming him from a "mid-level character actor" to an unofficial spokesman for the cause.

Before long, Tippi Hedren turned up. "Californians are very big animal-lovers," she said. She was wearing a leopard-print shirt, goose earrings, a panther ring, and a lion pin of her own design. "We save everybody. We saved the bobcat, we saved the mountain lion. I've worked on a number of bills. The anti-declawing-of-big-cats bill—the Governor signed that one right before he signed the foie-gras bill." Someone asked about "The Birds." "More people were worried about the birds than about me!" she said. "When we were doing the scene where the children are being attacked, the great animal trainer Ray Berwick had trained three seagulls to dive-bomb the kids and come back to him. He very loosely wired the beaks closed so that they couldn't bite the kids. The first one circled, dive-bombed the kids, and came back. So did the second one. The third one took off. Berwick went to Hitchcock and said, 'Hitch, we can't shoot anymore today. I have to find that bird.' He went out into the bay and searched for hours, and he found it. It would have died a very slow, painful death."

Corey Feldman and his assistant, Scott, a large, protective-looking fellow, were at the bar. Scott was wolfing down a plate of faux gras. "I'm the biggest carnivore on the planet," he said. "This tastes good, but it's not like a foie

gras. But I wouldn't buy that stuff now that I know how cruel it is." He reconsidered a moment. "Maybe, like, a pâté."

After the cocktail hour, the bill's author, State Senator John Burton, a brusque Democrat from the Bay Area, took the podium. "People keep asking me, 'What was it that got Arnold to sign the bill?'" he said. "At the bottom of the



Arnold Schwarzenegger

letter saying what the bill is about, it says, 'Arnold: Save Donald Duck and Fuck Wolfgang Puck.' " Everybody laughed.

A few days later, Ginor, of Hudson Valley Foie Gras, was feeling moderately hopeful in spite of the dark omen in the West. "I think New Yorkers pride themselves on not being flaky the way that, say, they have an image of Californians being," he said. He may soon find out. Assemblyman John McEneny, an Albany Democrat, plans to reintroduce an anti-foie-gras bill in January.

—Dana Goodyear

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION MEXICO



"Mexico is different," the Drifters Masserted, some years ago. There could be no arguing this, over the past five weeks, as a white flatbed truck turned up at various busy spots around town, presenting an alternate vision of winter to

passersby. The truck, commissioned by the Mexico Tourism Board, was painted with travel-agency slogans like "Mexico: It's Beyond Your Expectations." In back, in a Plexiglas pen the size of a shipping container, three young women, in bikinis, and one young man, in surfer trunks, lolled about on a patch of beach. The tableau featured fake palms, real sand, honest games of chess and checkers, halfhearted beachball-tossing, aimless booty-shaking, occasional lotion application, and, above all, authentic ennui, of a kind seen on actual tropical beaches, as well as in strip-club dressing rooms. The colder New York got, the better Mexico looked.

Last Thursday morning, the truck took up position on Broadway at Forty-ninth Street and commenced its daily triggering of double takes, grins, head shakes, snapshots, cell-phone "Yo, dude"s, and leering "Yo, baby"s. According to Russ Levinson, the truck's driver and lifeguard, who was out on the sidewalk in an overcoat and scarf, distributing handbills, the two questions that pedestrians asked most frequently were "Can I go in there?" and "Aren't they cold?" In both cases, the answer was "No." "Cielito Lindo," the Frito Bandito theme, blared from speakers, as one of the girls in the truck checked her Blackberry and another sat on a towel, picking at sunburned (or sunlamp-burned) skin.

"Let's get some action going," Levinson said. He put on techno in place of the mariachi music, and said, into a walkie-talkie, "Can you guys get up?" The women rose and began absently volleying a beach ball.

There were steel stairs leading up to their pen. Inside, it was warm, seventy-five degrees. The sand was fine and deep; the sky—a ceiling of backlit panels—was pale blue, with wispy clouds, and the sun shone brightly from a fleet of footlights. You couldn't hear the street.

The sunbathers introduced themselves: Dragan, an aspiring Serb businessman, tall and thin, with dark stubble and long feet; Puja, a muscular actress/singer; Michelle, a model, with a tendency to wink; and Lila, a cocktail waitress, with a belly ring and Shannon Doherty bangs. Levinson made it clear that the bathers were meant to represent not Mexicans but, rather, New Yorkers on vacation in Mexico. These four had scant real-Mexico experience, though Dragan had had a

graduate-school roommate named Ruben and Lila had once been to Tijuana.

Her impression? "Dirty," she said.

"Don't say that," Levinson said, looking pained.

Lila smiled and corrected herself. "It was a great cultural experience."

A man with long blond hair and rectangular glasses bounded up the stairs and opened the door. "I am from Poland," he said, as the cold air rushed in. "This is real Mexico? Can I go inside?" Levinson shooed him away.

Sitting in the glass cage, one felt a bit, though in some ways not enough, like Billy Pilgrim on Tralfamadore. Every fifteen seconds or so, someone snapped a picture. Men gestured for the women to turn around. Every few minutes, a tradesman pulled his van alongside—Inter-Boro Sprinkler, Paramount Plumbing—and, in one way or another, conveyed praise.

"We're not supposed to make eye contact," Lila said.

"Because we're supposed to be in Mexico," Levinson said.

Across the street, a man in a purple shirt stepped out of an electronics store and trained a pair of binoculars on the truck. When the sunbathers looked his way, he waved and went back into the store.

Time passed slowly, in the box.

"Dragan, what's wrong with you?"

"Nothing." Dragan ignored the women and said, with some weariness, "A lot of people think it's nice to be in here with three girls all day, but after a month of hearing girls talk all day about girl stuff—I wish there was another guy."

"Ow, I got sand in my eye," Lila said.

"Dragan, can you cross your eyes?" Michelle said.

"All you have to do is look at your nose," Puja said.

"I can't cross my eyes," Lila said. "I can't whistle. I can't snap my fingers."

"This ball sucks. Dragan needs to blow it up again."

"Dragan, we need more air."

"I want to get one of those magazines and give Dragan the love quiz."

Across the street, the man in the purple shirt had reemerged from the electronics store. It was cold outside the truck, and loud. He introduced himself as Tito. Tito Raihan. Sales manager. "I am watching the view," he said. "It's nice. Mexico. I'm thinking to go there."

—Nick Paumgarten

THE FINANCIAL PAGE IT PAYS TO STAY

In the late nineties, the city of Toledo, Ohio, faced a crisis. DaimlerChrysler, which ran a Jeep factory there, announced plans to build a new plant, but offered no guarantee that it would be built in Toledo. So the city and the state came courting. They promised Daimler a ten-year exemption from all property taxes, offered hundreds of millions of dollars in tax credits, and bought out eighty-three homes and sixteen small businesses, in order to give the company more land. Crisis averted: Daimler is still building Jeeps in Toledo.

This arrangement, while extraordinarily generous, is fairly typical. Across the country, cities and states routinely lavish on companies what economists call "location-based incentives." No one outside of Ohio would have paid Toledo's largesse much mind had it not been for a surprising development: a few months ago, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, in Cincinnati, found that Daimler's tax credits in Toledo were unconstitutional. (The Court ruled that the credits interfered with interstate commerce, which only Congress has the power to regulate.) Months, or years, of appeals lie ahead, but, for the moment at least, much of what we know as corporate welfare may be technically illegal.

Thirty years ago, such news wouldn't have meant much. Cities and states used to lure new businesses the old-fashioned way: cheap labor, low crime rates, good schools, better country clubs. Beginning in the seventies, though, the combination of stagflation, increased global competition, and greater corporate mobility turned local governments into rival suitors showering companies with the Chamber of Commerce equivalents of flowers and chocolates. With tax breaks, cheap loans, and outright giveaways, states and local communities hand out almost fifty billion dollars in incentives every year. The logic is simple enough: businesses create jobs, so governments should do whatever it takes to attract them. And even though tax breaks are rarely the determining factor in where companies choose to go—Irvine, Cali-

fornia, for example, has become an auto-industry hub without offering any tax breaks at all—companies would be foolish to turn down free money. So they have mastered the location-shopping racket, pitting cities against each other in search of a sweetheart deal.

The cities are often easy marks. The classic example, of course, is the new sports stadium: a team threatens to leave, and the home town panics, spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a white elephant. But it happens with other businesses as well. New York City has been one of the worst offenders, especially under former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. It gave hundreds of millions of dollars in tax breaks to firms that



weren't going anywhere; most infamously, Giuliani committed the city to subsidizing a new, billion-dollar headquarters for the New York Stock Exchange, amid implausible threats that it would move to New Jersey. (Michael Bloomberg quashed that plan upon taking office. He also renounced incentives that he'd been granted to keep his own company's headquarters in New York.) What's more, corporate welfare is fertile ground for cronyism and political favoritism.

Obviously, cities have reason to dangle a lure. A recent study by Enrico Moretti, of U.C. Berkeley, and Michael Greenstone, of M.I.T., which compared cities that had competed against each other for new plants, found that the

winners generally had benefitted—they had slightly higher tax revenues and increased property values. The problem is that though the city with the new plant may be better off, collectively we are all worse off, because the tax money spent on corporate welfare could otherwise go to more productive uses, such as education and infrastructure. For the American economy, it doesn't matter whether Daimler builds Jeeps in Toledo or Kalamazoo; whatever one city spends to outdo the other is money thrown away.

All public spending distributes benefits unevenly, but the sheer capriciousness of the incentive process makes the inequity worse. Among the plaintiffs in the Toledo case were three of the city's small businesses, which were understandably annoyed at seeing their tax proceeds padding Daimler's profits. The corporate-welfare system encourages state and local governments to create an uneven playing field and puts them in the position of deciding which businesses deserve a leg up—in effect, making big bets with public money. When these bets backfire, it can hurt. Last year, Indianapolis lost more than a thousand jobs when United Airlines shut down a maintenance center for which the city, the county, and the state had pitched in hundreds of millions of dollars. And the small town of Galesburg, Illinois, spent a decade plying Maytag with incentives only to watch the company shut down a refrigerator plant and move production to Mexico. The local district attorney has threatened to sue Maytag, but has been opposed by Galesburgers who fear scaring off other businesses.

People in local government know that they should kick the habit. In the early nineties, at a meeting in Washington, D.C., the nation's governors pledged to invest in "improvements to the general economic climate" rather than in "subsidies for individual projects and companies." But that pledge didn't last. States and cities are trapped in a prisoner's dilemma: as long as one town can woo a corporation with baubles and tax breaks, every town has to be willing to do so. That Toledo decision may be their only hope. The business of America shouldn't be subsidizing business.

—James Surowiecki

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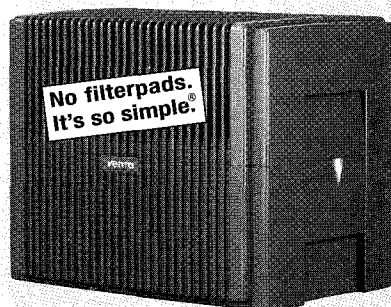
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LETTER FROM KIEV

ORANGE ALERT

On the streets of a revolution.

BY ANDREY SLIVKA

During the Soviet era, the Lyvky district of Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, was where the Communist elite lived and worked, and its streets have retained a certain oppressiveness. Even today, it is a bedroom community for the powerful. The main buildings from which Ukraine, a country of forty-eight million people, is governed—the Parliament Building, the Supreme Court, and the seats of various ministries, outside which militiamen stand guard, smoking and talking—are a short walk away. Traffic police pull cars over for regular security checks. I've lived in the neighborhood since June of 2003, when I moved to Kiev to edit an English-language newspaper, the *Post*, and, although the city in general feels free and open, the Lyvky district instills respect.

In the last week of November, the district was transformed. Close to midnight on Tuesday, November 23rd, as I walked home from my office through the snow, the broad vista down Luteranska Street ended in a mass of waving banners—a blur of blood-orange, the color adopted by the leading opposition political party. Hundreds of young people with orange ribbons on their arms and their knapsacks ran through the neighborhood. The crowd had gathered at the intersection of Bankova Street, where Ukraine's Presidential Administration is situated, and was growing. The crystal air seemed to vibrate with energy.

All the credible evidence suggested that the government had rigged the Presidential election, two days earlier, in favor of the Prime Minister, Viktor Yanukovich, effectively stealing it from Viktor Yushchenko, the leader of the opposition bloc, Nasha Ukraina (Our Ukraine). Yushchenko, a Western-leaning reformist and the country's most popular politician, had earlier survived what his supporters believed was an assassination attempt. The European Union and the United States, among others, refused to

accept the election results, citing huge irregularities—thugs intimidating opposition voters, wildly biased coverage in the state media, destruction of ballots in some areas, and turnout of more than a hundred per cent in others.

For the better part of a year, it had been evident that Ukraine's ruling class—a coalition of leftover Soviet bureaucrats and newly rich tycoons, the Ukrainian oligarchs—had no interest in a free and fair vote. Yanukovich had been handpicked by the current President, Leonid Kuchma, and was expected to be a steward of the current order. Kuchma had presided over a period of rapid economic growth, but he was facing allegations of corruption and didn't want them to follow him into retirement. In 2000, the decapitated body of Georgy Gongadze, a muckraking journalist, was found in a forest outside Kiev, and Kuchma had had to fend off charges that he ordered the killing. The first-round Presidential vote, on October 31st, in which twenty-two other candidates were eliminated, was also said to have been marred by fraud.

Yushchenko and his supporters were subjected to a dizzying amount of harassment and violence during the campaign. A regional campaign office was trashed; Yushchenko supporters were beaten; Our Ukraine meetings were disrupted and rallies were attacked by gangs of thugs. A chart of incidents of harassment that the *Post* assembled between early June and late September had more than fifty entries.

If the vote-rigging was no surprise, what happened after the election was. Mass protests broke out—in Kiev, in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv, and elsewhere. On Monday, November 22nd, the day after the election, fifty thousand people gathered in Independence Square, in downtown Kiev; by the following Friday, nearly a million people thronged the streets. Riot police had blocked both ends of Bankova Street. The protesters

had turned Kiev into a zone of peaceful anarchy under the sway of what people were already calling the Orange Revolution. The police had parked sand-filled dump trucks near one end of the street, and young people clambered onto them, like figures on the barricades during the French Revolution. “Yu-shchen-ko! Yu-shchen-ko!” they chanted. Against

The couple ignored him and moved on. I walked to Institutska Street, near the parliament complex. From there, I could see down to Independence Square. Even at two in the morning, thousands of people were there. Kettle fires flickered in a tent city, surrounded by barricades, that had been set up on Khreshchatyk Street, the city’s main thoroughfare. Near the

stolen from us—our right to vote. This mobilization was inspired by the authorities. They helped build a real civic coalition around Yushchenko.”

It would be hard to find two members of the Ukrainian elite more seemingly dissimilar than Viktor Fedorovich Yanukovich and Viktor Andreyevich Yu-



“We’re young, but we know what to do and we’re doing it,” one activist said. Photograph by Joseph Sywenkyj.

a backdrop of floodlights, their orange flags, bearing the Yushchenko slogan “Tak!”—Ukrainian for “yes”—traced dramatic arcs in the gloom. Miniature snowdrifts collected on the helmets of the riot police, who stood by and watched.

An older man emerged from the doorway of one of the more elegant apartment buildings and, in a tone of annoyance, addressed a young couple in Russian: “May I ask you a question? You’re nice young people. Why are you doing this? Who’s putting you up to it? Is it of your own free will?”

“The opposition pays us,” the girl said sarcastically. “We get ten dollars a day and a bottle of vodka.”

“No, come on, seriously.”

intersection where traffic police usually stand, a protester draped in Ukraine’s blue-and-yellow flag walked alone, chanting the rhythmic slogan that could be heard throughout Kiev: “We are many! And we can’t be defeated!” He blew an air horn, a bleat of exuberance.

A few days later, I spoke to Dmytro Potyekhin, the co-founder of Znayu (the word means “I know”), a nonpartisan civic initiative whose purpose is to promote fair elections. “We’re young, but we know what to do and we’re doing it,” Potyekhin, who is twenty-eight, said. “Ukrainians are considered by many observers to be a more peaceful people than any other nation. But we are also owners, and this was a case in which something very personal was being

shchenko—the two men encapsulate, almost too neatly, the division between eastern and western Ukraine. The histories of the two regions have intersected and diverged at least since the thirteenth century, when the Mongols of the Golden Horde conquered the east. Today, eastern Ukraine, which includes Yanukovich’s home province, Donetsk, is an industrial landscape of mines and steel mills. It is part of the Donbas region, which also includes the province of Luhansk, and is mostly Russian-speaking. During the Stalin era, the Kremlin sent Russian workers into the new industrial centers, and many of the residents still identify more strongly with Moscow than they do with Kiev. Eastern Ukraine is the territory of most of Ukraine’s oligarchs, who, like

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their Russian counterparts, have made fortunes by using government connections to "privatize" state enterprises. From 1997 to 2002, Yanukovych was the governor of Donetsk.

There is a Russian slang word, *sovok*, that describes someone with the old Soviet mentality: suspicious of outsiders, deferential to power, conformist. Yanukovych is the type of leader to whom the *sovok* can relate. He began his career as a factory worker and rose to become the manager of a transportation company, and he retains the mannerisms of a Soviet boss. He favors black turtlenecks and usually seems to be glaring. Like many other Ukrainian politicians who started speaking the national language—which is to Russian as Portuguese is to Spanish—regularly and in public only after the country gained independence, in 1991, he makes mistakes in grammar and pronunciation.

Yushchenko, an economist, grew up in a village in the Sumy region, in north-eastern Ukraine, and was a Communist Party member. After serving as the head of the National Bank of Ukraine, he was, from 1999 to 2001, Prime Minister under Kuchma. Nevertheless, Yushchenko has come to be associated with, and draws the core of his support from, western Ukraine and Kiev, which, though it is geographically near the center of the country, is more closely identified with the West. He collects art, is married to a United States citizen of Ukrainian descent (whom the state-controlled media have portrayed as a C.I.A. agent), hikes, and is a serious amateur painter. He wants to bring Ukraine closer to the West, and has set his sights on the goal of membership in the European Union. He excites the same distrust among Yanukovych's base that Yanukovych does among his.

The Ukrainian west, which borders on the European Union countries of Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary, includes Galicia, Chernivtsi, and Trans-Carpathia. For more than a century, these areas were ruled by the Hapsburgs. Russian is spoken with reluctance here, and people see themselves as Europeans—poor Europeans, but Europeans nonetheless. If Donetsk is a gritty Rust Belt city, the Galician capital, Lviv, resembles a shabby Prague. The culture is open to Western influence, although what looks like cosmopolitanism is, in another sense, nationalism, a self-

conscious assertion of distance from Russia. Many residents believe that they are the true Ukrainians, in distinction to their eastern cousins.

It was no secret that Yanukovych was the Kremlin's candidate. President Vladimir Putin of Russia openly supported him, making two trips to Ukraine on his behalf, and his campaign allegedly received large amounts of Russian money. Yanukovych favors closer ties with Russia, making Russian an official language, and allowing dual citizenship—a movement, in other words, toward pan-Slavism, in response to the empire's collapse. Volodymyr Polokhalo, the editor of the magazine *Politychna Dumka* (*Political Thought*), says, "Putin is Kuchma's guarantor. He was the director of the Ukrainian elections—the director and the producer."

Putin's policy and his psychology are informed by a traditional hierarchy that makes Ukrainians the dependent younger siblings—the "Little Russians," as they are often called. For centuries, Ukraine has been considered to be the linchpin of the Russian empire. Without it, Russia would lose its influence over a territory larger than France, containing some of the world's richest farmland; the Donbas's industries; the Black Sea ports; and a buffer zone against Western Europe. Lenin once wrote, "For us to lose Ukraine would be to lose our head."

Russia has always been suspicious of Ukrainian aspirations. Catherine the Great sent troops down the Dnieper River to wipe out the Zaporizhian Cossacks who ruled southeastern Ukraine, and solidify Russia's control over the region. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, a Ukrainian national movement began to emerge in the east, largely in response to the Enlightenment and the Romantic idea of nationalism. "You had intellectuals there who began to think that Ukrainians should be like any other nation," Roman Szporluk, a professor of Ukrainian history at Harvard, says. "They began to think of themselves as one of the peoples of Europe, like the Czechs or the Poles. Their mental map was already beyond the Russian Empire."

A few decades later, in the western regions, a distinctly Ukrainian political culture was also developing. By 1914, under the Hapsburgs, Ukrainians were

represented in the parliament in Vienna and in the provincial parliament in Lviv. The work of poets who wrote in Ukrainian formed a sort of secular gospel.

A Ukrainian Republic, administered from Kiev, rose in 1917 amid the chaos of the First World War. A few months later, however, the Bolsheviks set up a Soviet Ukrainian government. By 1919, all of Ukraine except some of the west was under Lenin's, and then Stalin's, control. Between five and seven million Ukrainians died in the 1932-33 famine, which was created when Stalin violently drove the peasants off their land and onto collective farms.

Stalin sent the Red Army into the west in 1939, two years before the Nazis invaded Ukraine. There is disagreement about whether western Ukrainians met the Wehrmacht with flowers, as Soviet propaganda had it. Nationalist groups like the Ukrainian Partisan Army waged a war against the Germans and the Soviets. But some Ukrainians undeniably chose to side with Hitler over Stalin, and some volun-

teered for the S.S. Horrible crimes were committed against Jews and Poles. As a result of these shameful episodes, it became possible to brand any manifestation of Ukrainian nationalism a cousin to Hitlerism. For many Russified eastern Ukrainians, "western Ukraine" is something dark and foreign: a source of treachery, collaboration, civil war. When Yanukovich's allies attacked Yushchenko—whose father, a Red Army soldier, was a prisoner at Auschwitz—as a Nazi, they struck a resonant chord in the national memory.

Still, many Ukrainians argue that talk of the east-west divide has, since the election, got more attention than it deserves, thanks to Western reporters with the red state-blue state contrast on their minds, and has become a distraction. Oksana Zabuzhko, a well-known writer, told me, "There are differences between northern Ukraine and southern Ukraine and western Ukraine and eastern Ukraine, and Crimea is another thing. It's a very multifaceted country, but this is not the point. Yushchenko's victory is special in that it is

not entirely his own. His people have done many naïve, even stupid things. But he has become the symbol that unites a nation heading toward the future. What is now on Independence Square is the nation." As far as she was concerned, the real division was between "the future and the past"—between "those who have been left in the Soviet past" and those who are dedicated to a democratic Ukraine.

Putin does not want to reconstitute the Soviet Union, but he does want Ukraine and Russia to have a much closer, more dependent relationship than his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, demanded. Losing Ukraine in 1991 was hard enough; for Putin, letting it slip toward the West for good would be devastating—far worse than the loss of the Baltic states. And so Yanukovich had to win.

Early in the campaign, it became clear that the government would use dirty tactics. On October 31, 2003, Yushchenko's Our Ukraine bloc tried to hold a regional congress in Yanukovich's home

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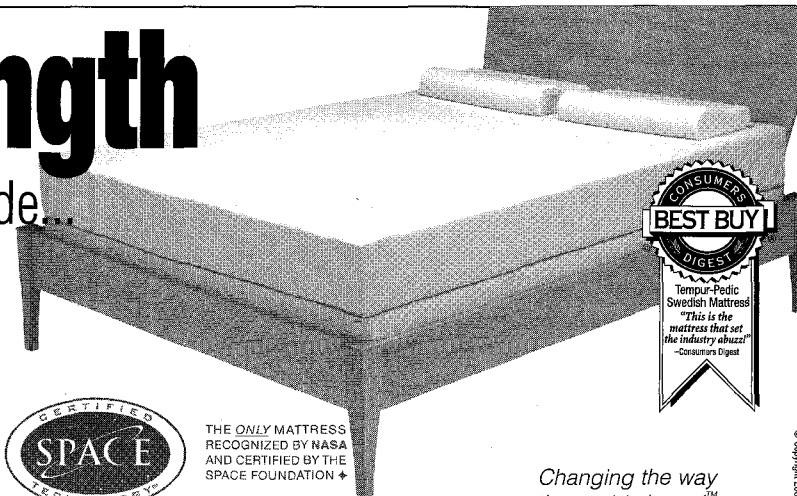
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base of Donetsk. When Yushchenko arrived, he was met by hostile crowds. Press reports said that many of the demonstrators had been paid, and received free vodka and beer. Photographs showed Yushchenko moving warily, under guard, through the mobs. The city was plastered with posters depicting him in Nazi regalia. Other posters decried "Nashism"—a pun on both "Nazism" and Nasha Ukraina, which has been slandered in the media as a hard-right organization. Our Ukraine was forced to cancel the congress. Yanukovych commented that Our Ukraine had failed to "take the temperature" of Donetsk and suggested that his opponent "stock up on Pampers and not bother with politics."

Donetsk was the beginning. On April 18th of this year, in the western town of Mukachevo, an Our Ukraine candidate for mayor ran against a candidate from the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (united), which is allied with Kuchma. Gangs of young men moved among polling stations, attacking election observers, threatening journalists, and stealing ballot boxes. The S.D.P.U.(u) candidate was declared the winner. Taras Stetskiy, a member of parliament in Yushchenko's bloc, told the *Financial Times* that Mukachevo was the place where "all sorts of black political technologies were tested"—a dress rehearsal for the Presidential election.

The blatant fraud received limited attention in the Ukrainian media, which are, as a rule, obedient to the authorities. On both the state television channel, UT-1, and the main private channels, 1+1, Inter, ICTV, and Novy Kanal—all of which are controlled, directly or indirectly, by oligarchs—Yushchenko was effectively blackballed. In fact, it is an open question how "divided" Ukraine would be if Yanukovych's core constituency received unbiased information. Only Channel 5, which is owned by Petro Poroshenko—Yushchenko's own oligarch—depicted the opposition leader positively. Ukraine's newspapers also, for the most part, went along with the government.

Mukachevo inspired students in Kiev to form Pora, an activist group that became a motivating force behind the Orange Revolution; there is reason to think that without Pora events would never have gone as far as they have. ("Pora" means "It's time," and the name is a refer-

CIGARS

The same cracked hoarse nasal sexy laugh—
I almost lifted my face out of the newspaper
to remind her of the drowned bee and the shaky
pedestrian bridge, I almost told her her
favorite passage of Mahler, we were that close
going up and down the ladders and interchanging
souls with each other, we were that overlapping,
appearing and disappearing, that prayerful,
lighting each other's cigars inside the room of laurel-green horse laughter.

—Gerald Stern

ence to a line from a nationalistic poem by the western Ukrainian writer Ivan Franko: "*Nam pora dlya Ukrainy zhyt*"—"It's time to live for Ukraine.") Pora swiftly established a nationwide network, with a disciplined, well-coordinated presence on the streets. The authorities took notice. According to a Pora spokeswoman, hundreds of activists were arrested, beaten, or harassed. In October, bomb-making materials were "found" by the police in Pora's Kiev office. Group leaders were detained on suspicion of terrorist activity, but were released for lack of evidence.

Despite the surface resemblances between the Orange Revolution and Prague's Velvet Revolution, in 1989—the crowds of young people, the commitment to peaceful change, and the vibrancy of the emerging political culture—there is no moral hero here with the stature of Václav Havel. The injustice to Yushchenko triggered these events, but he remains a fairly ordinary politician who, while committed to reform, will probably not be able to shake the hold that the oligarchs and other power brokers have on Ukrainian politics. Even some of his own followers have never been convinced that he is, on a basic level, a strong man.

Whatever his faults, Yushchenko became the focus for the aspirations of a generation that is not old enough to feel nostalgia for the Soviets, and that longs for Ukraine to be, as people frequently say, a "civilized, European country." The young, Westward-looking Ukrainians with whom I work, and their peers, spoke about Yanukovych in almost apocalyptic terms. In a smoky Kiev café on the eve of the election, over glasses of Ukrainian

beer, I talked to Lesya Yakovenko, a twenty-four-year-old native of Mariupol, on the Sea of Azov. "If Yanukovych becomes President," she said, "I'll just have to emigrate. I'll simply have to."

I asked if life would really change so much. Kuchma, who used to be the director of the Soviet Union's largest missile factory, is also close to Putin, and has governed in an authoritarian way; in terms of corruption allegations, he makes Yanukovych look like an innocent. And, although Yushchenko launched an anti-corruption campaign when he was Prime Minister, some people in his circle have been accused of improprieties.

Yakovenko shook her head. "It's just the embarrassment of it all. I don't know how we'll face other countries if our President is a *zek*." *Zek* is Russian slang for "prisoner"; Yanukovych served two stints in Soviet prisons as a young man, one for assault and one for a crime that has never been publicly disclosed.

On August 10th, during a campaign stop in Crimea, Yushchenko's bodyguards noticed three men surreptitiously filming the candidate. They confronted the men, and a search of their car reportedly turned up tapes of Yushchenko's private conversations and five extra license plates. Two days later, Yushchenko's Audi was forced to the shoulder three times by a truck. According to a press report, when the truck driver was finally pulled over, he refused to identify himself, citing an obscure constitutional article. (Fatal car crashes involving opposition politicians and journalists occur with suspicious frequency in Ukraine.)

Then, on September 6th, Yushchenko began suffering from extreme stomach and back pains. By September 9th, he had, bafflingly, disappeared from the campaign trail. Even some in the press who had bemoaned what seemed to be a lack of toughness in the candidate were shocked. Only a month and a half remained until the first election round. How sick was he? A few days later, it emerged that Yushchenko was in a clinic in Vienna, seriously ill with what Dr. Nikolai Korpan, his chief physician, described as an array of afflictions. Yushchenko's campaign manager identified them as, among other things, pancreatitis, gastritis, facial paralysis, and proctocolitis. Korpan announced that an unidentifiable "special atypical agent" could have set off the maladies. The Yushchenko camp claimed that he had been poisoned, and it is a curious fact that, the night before he became ill, Yushchenko had dined with Ihor Smeshko, the head of Ukraine's Security Service, and his deputy, Volodymyr Satsyuk, to discuss security issues related to the campaign.

On September 18th, Yushchenko led a large campaign rally in Kiev. His appearance was startling—his face, which had been unlined, was palsied, a swollen mass of craters and lesions. In a thick, distorted voice, he told the crowd, "I want to say to the government, 'You won't poison us.'" Three days later, he stood up in parliament to deliver a dramatic, unscripted speech. After reciting a list of prominent Ukrainians who had died suspiciously in the previous few years, he said, "Don't ask who is next. Each one of you will be next. When you ask why I avoided the same fate, the answer is it was the wrong dose at the wrong time and my angels were awake. . . . You know very well who the killer is—the government."

The allegations of poisoning were treated dismissively by Yushchenko's peers in the government. Some attributed his illness to alcoholism, others to bad sushi—never mind that neither one would fully explain his symptoms.

By the time the polls closed on Election Day, the first accounts of wholesale fraud had emerged. Senator Richard Lugar, who was in Ukraine as President Bush's special envoy, told reporters, "It is now apparent that a concerted and forceful program of Election Day fraud and

abuse was enacted with either the leadership or cooperation of governmental authorities." Pora activists started building the tent city at eight o'clock that night. It was obvious that they had planned for this moment. For example, they refused to allow people who were drinking to enter areas where they might provoke the police.

Footage of the protests was being broadcast around the world—but not across Ukraine. UT-1, the state network, and the main private channels, instead reported that Yanukovych had won by almost a million votes and had been congratulated by Putin. In cities like Kiev, there were other ways of getting information—kiosks carrying foreign newspapers, a range of broadcasters, blogs, and, of course, the protesters themselves. But in the eastern Donbas the officially controlled media are dominant. Channel 5, for example, was taken off the air as soon as the protest burgeoned in Kiev. In many parts of the country, Internet access is extremely limited. As far as anyone watching only the local news knew, there were no protests to speak of.

On November 24th, staff members of various magazines published by the *Post's* parent company gathered around the newsroom's television as the Central Election Commission declared Yanukovych the official winner. The editor of the women's magazine *Pink*, a woman in her mid-twenties, who was educated in the United States and had lived in France, began to weep.

But there were indications that the government had lost control. The sign-language interpreter who was supposed to be repeating the victory announcement on UT-1 instead signed, "The results are rigged. . . . Do not believe them." The news staffs at the major networks went on strike; for a while, some channels were left broadcasting loops of cartoons and travel shows. Then the stations began to give in. On November 25th, Alexander Rodnyansky, the co-chairman of 1+1, went on the air and read a statement saying that he and his staff would begin to tell the truth about the election. Soon afterward, the journalists on UT-1 were also able to report the news from Kiev.

"We decided to make a move, which is not to be considered a heroic move," Rodnyansky told me. "We were very much in the power of the pro-government point

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of view. That's been true of the whole campaign. There were many journalists at 1+1 who were very against this type of coverage." He went on, "Many regions unfortunately just discovered the situation in Ukraine because 1+1 just started broadcasting in them. That was quite an important move for us, a turning point for Ukraine."

On Saturday, November 27th, the parliament, in a symbolic gesture, declared the election invalid. The protesters were no longer outsiders; establishment figures were rushing to their side. Senior military officers declared their support for Yushchenko. The tent city now stretched a quarter of a mile beyond Independence Square, alongside heaps of donated firewood, clothing, and food. The noise—singing, guitar-playing, horn-blowing, laughter, chanting—was tremendous. The city's popular mayor, Oleksandr Omelchenko, had opened part of City Hall to protesters, who slept, sang, ate, and received medical attention

in its columned halls. ("These are our children, our future," Omelchenko told reporters.) Some of Ukraine's biggest celebrities had also rallied to Yushchenko. Ruslana, a Lviv native who won the 2004 Eurovision Song Contest, took the stage in Independence Square, accompanied by Wladimir Klitschko, the younger of boxing's Klitschko brothers. (His older brother, Vitali, the reigning heavyweight world champion, was preparing for a title bout in Las Vegas.)

As I walked through the Lyvky district, I also saw thousands of protesters from the provinces, many of them older people who moved through the wide streets with awed expressions, orange ribbons pinned to their coats. Some of them carried regional flags. People exchanged rumors about what Russia would do; certain politicians in the east were already talking of seceding.

Kuchma, meanwhile, seemed to be looking for a way out, even if it meant cutting Yanukovych loose. On Monday, November 29th, he proposed new elec-

tions. Typically, the offer wasn't what it seemed. What he had in mind, it emerged, was opening the field to an entirely new slate—which would give him a chance to come up with a stronger proxy. "There needs to be a compromise," Mikhail Pogrebinsky, who is an adviser to Kuchma, told me. "Half the country won't trust one man, and half won't trust the other. There are a lot of people in the square now, and it gives them the hope that they can take all the power. But they won't be able to win power in Donetsk."

Yushchenko's people rejected Kuchma's offer. They took their case to the Ukraine Supreme Court, where Yushchenko's lawyers presented witness after witness to document the fraud. On Tuesday, the protesters stormed the parliament, and made it into the lobby before the police, with help from Yushchenko himself, turned them back. The next day, the parliament passed a vote of no confidence in Yanukovych's government, which meant that Kuchma had sixty days to fire him. Kuchma flew

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to Moscow for consultations. At the airport, Putin, whose relations with Europe and the United States were being strained by the crisis, dismissed the idea of a quick repeat of the runoff: "What happens then? Will there have to be a third, a fourth, a twenty-fifth round?"

Javier Solana, the European Union foreign-policy chief, and Aleksander Kwasniewski, the President of Poland, arrived to mediate. One proposal involved ending the blockade of government buildings. It was accepted by Yushchenko but not by the crowds, or Pora, or his more radical supporters, like the glamorous Yulia Tymoshenko, who became known as the Gas Princess after making a fast fortune in the energy sector. (She had been briefly jailed on bribery charges, which she said were politically motivated; they were soon dismissed.) Tymoshenko was dividing her time between the floor of parliament, where she leads her own bloc, and the street, inciting the protesters and urging them on. On Thursday night, she said that any agree-

ment should be ratified "by all the people on the square."

On Friday, the crowds gathered around large-screen televisions that had been set up in Independence Square and waited for the Supreme Court decision, which was expected at any time. Every half hour or so, a group of clergymen and old women from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, which had supported Yanukovych, marched by the Court, chanting prayers; some wore blue-and-white scarves, the colors of Yanukovych's campaign, around their necks. The Pora activists cleared the way for the procession, admonishing the onlookers not to harass them. "They're a church, and they support a bandit," a man near me muttered.

It was after dark when the decision came. The Supreme Court threw out the results and ordered a new vote by December 26th. A roar rose from Independence Square. Oleksandr Datsyuk, a gray-haired man from Cherkassy, an old Cossack city southeast of Kiev, grabbed

me by the shoulders and pushed me forward through the crowd, laughing. "The people came, and I came along with them, and we won," he said. "We've always been patient, and now our patience has ended. Now there's going to be democracy, and we're going to live like our neighbors."

Ostap Kryvdyk, a twenty-five-year-old Pora activist, had told me earlier, "It's something we couldn't imagine. Two months ago, it looked as if we had a lazy, uninteresting capital, frightened eastern regions, panicking western regions. We would win if God helped us—and God either would or would not. It was a surprise that people rose from their knees and stood in the snow." He went on, "We Ukrainians have this very big tradition of loss. We don't know how to be happy. I'd say there would only be one fact that will make me shout, and it will last for five minutes: when Yushchenko takes the oath of office."

And then? I asked.

"Then I will become the opposition to him." ♦

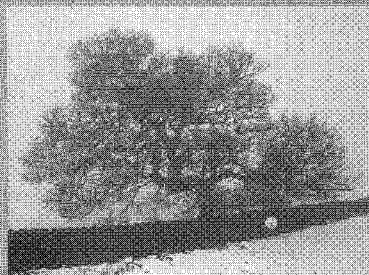
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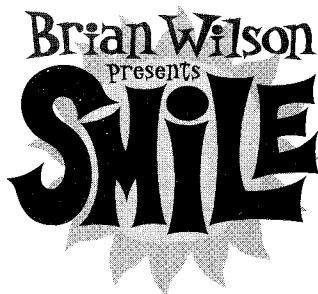
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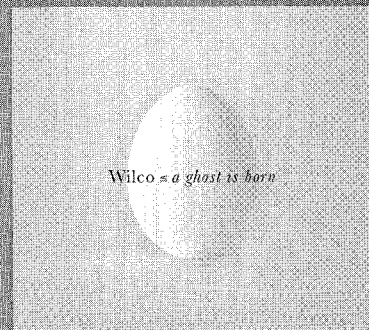
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SURPRISE ROCKS DISNEY TRIAL

BY WOODY ALLEN

The Walt Disney Company shareholder suit over the severance package paid to departing president Michael Ovitz was jolted today by the testimony of an unexpected witness, who was questioned by counsel for the entertainment giant.

Counsel: Will the witness please state his name.

Witness: Mickey Mouse.

C: Please tell the court your occupation.

W: Animated rodent.

C: Were you friendly with Michael Eisner?

W: I wouldn't say friendly—we had dinner together a number of times. Once he and his wife had Minnie and me to their house.

C: Did you ever discuss business with him?

W: I was present at a breakfast between Mr. Eisner, Roy Disney, Pluto, and Goofy.

C: Where was this breakfast?

W: At the Beverly Hills Hotel.

C: Were there any other witnesses?

W: Steven Spielberg stopped at our table to say hello... oh, and Daffy Duck.

C: You're acquainted with Daffy Duck?

W: Daffy Duck and I had met at a dinner at Sue Mengers' home some months back and had become friendly.

C: I take it Mr. Eisner did not approve of this relationship with Daffy Duck?

W: We quarrelled over it several times.

C: What finally happened?

W: I eventually stopped seeing Daffy when he became a Scientologist.

C: I direct you back to the breakfast. Do you recall what was discussed?

W: Mr. Eisner said that he planned to hire Michael Ovitz, the head of C.A.A.

C: How did you feel about that?

W: I was surprised, but Pluto took the news harder. He seemed despondent.

C: Why despondent?

W: He was worried because Mr. Ovitz had a much closer relationship with Goofy, and Pluto felt his screen time might be reduced.

C: So you were aware of a "special relationship" between Mr. Ovitz and Goofy?

W: I knew that when Mr. Ovitz was an agent he had courted Goofy, and



if I'm not mistaken the two shared a house together in Aspen.

C: Did there come a time when they became closer?

W: Mr. Ovitz stood by Goofy when he was busted in Malibu.

C: Is it true Goofy had a drug problem?

W: He was addicted to Percodan.

C: How long had that been going on?

W: Goofy went on painkillers after a flop he took in a cartoon. He parachuted off the Empire State Building with an umbrella and hurt his back.

C: And?

SEYMOUR CHWAST

W: Mr. Ovitz was responsible for getting Goofy into the Betty Ford Center.

C: Did you ever tell Mr. Eisner of your apprehensions over his plan to hire Mr. Ovitz?

W: Minnie and I discussed it. We knew they'd clash.

C: Did you bring it up with anyone besides your wife?

W: Dumbo, Bambi—I really can't remember. Oh, yes—Jiminy Cricket, one time at Barbra Streisand's house. She threw a party for Jiminy when he bought his place in Trancas.

C: And was anything concluded?

W: Dumbo felt that Donald Duck should talk to Mr. Eisner about our concerns because Mr. Eisner always seemed to listen to Donald. As he put it, Donald was "one of the deepest ducks he'd ever met." The two spent a lot of time together in Donald's pond.

C: And was the relationship reciprocal?

W: Oh, yes. Donald lived at Mr. Eisner's home for six months when he and Daisy Duck were separated. Donald had been having an affair with Petunia Pig, Porky's girlfriend. It was a no-no at Disney to socialize with creatures from a competing studio, but in Donald's case Mr. Eisner chose to look the other way, which upset the shareholders.

C: This was the affair you referred to in your deposition?

W: Yes. My memory's hazy on this—but I think Donald was introduced to Petunia Pig at the home of Jeffrey Katzenberg.

C: You were present?

W: Yes—myself, Tom Cruise, Tom Hanks, Jack Nicholson. I believe Sean Penn, Wile E. Coyote, the Roadrunner—

C: Tom and Jerry?

W: No, they were at EST that weekend.

C: It was six months later when Mr. Katzenberg and Mr. Eisner became involved in a lawsuit. Do you recall those details?

W: It had to do with Mr. Eisner promising stock options to Bugs Bunny if he would come to work at Disney.

C: And did Bugs?

W: No. Bugs is his own man. At that time he wanted to take a year off to write a novel.

C: Getting back to the party—do you recall what happened next?

W: Yes. Donald Duck got drunk and made a pass at Nicole Kidman. It was

extremely embarrassing because at the time she and Tom Cruise were still married. Donald was rather hostile to Tom, I recall, and felt Tom was being offered all the roles he wanted. I recall Mr. Eisner at that party taking Donald outside to calm him down.

C: Do you recall what happened next?

W: On the lawn of Mr. Katzenberg's house Donald met Petunia Pig. He found her very beautiful and very exciting and I know they liked a lot of the same music groups. And Donald always had a problem with anger management. He had been on Prozac for years because he'd become convinced his career had tanked and soon he would wind up on a Cantonese menu. Despite Mr. Eisner's advice, Donald began seeing Porky's girlfriend on the sly.

C: To the best of your knowledge, how long did the affair continue?

W: For about a year. Petunia told Donald she couldn't keep seeing him because she'd fallen deeply in love with Warren Beatty and he with her. If you recall, Warren took her to the Cannes Film Festival.

C: Did there come a time when Daisy Duck threw Donald out?

W: Yes, and Mr. Eisner took him in and let him live at his house till Donald and Daisy finally agreed that they'd live together again but have an open relationship sexually.

C: So, to the best of your recollection, did anyone at all ever tell Mr. Eisner it might not be a good idea to hire Mr. Ovitz?

W: The night of the Academy Awards I brought it up to Pinocchio but he didn't want to get involved.

C: And so you're saying neither Pinocchio nor anyone else warned Mr. Eisner that he and Mr. Ovitz might be an incompatible match.

W: To the best of my knowledge, that's correct.

C: And when the job didn't work out the subject came up of Mr. Ovitz's severance package—the hundred-and-forty-million-dollar payment? Did Mr. Ovitz ever feel it was excessive?

W: I just know that Jiminy Cricket was often perched on Mr. Ovitz's shoulder and advised him to always let his conscience be his guide.

C: And?

W: The rest is history.

C: Your witness. ♦

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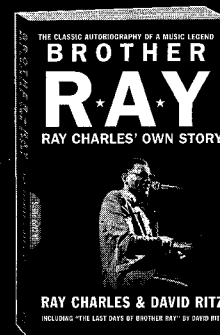
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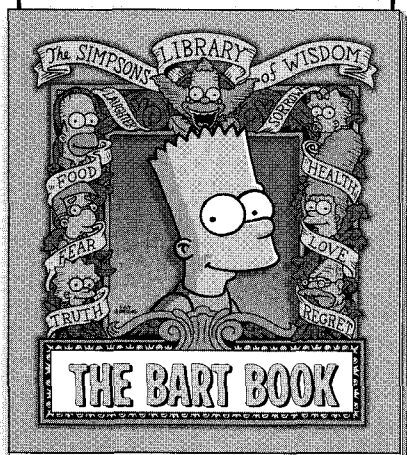
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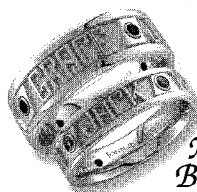
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ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

CURIOSITY SHOPPING

Leaving the neighborhood for the holidays.

BY JUDITH THURMAN

I'm not sure why I so rarely venture beyond my home turf to shop for the holidays. Sloth and habit, like an invisible cattle fence, have confined me to an outgrazed pasture. After the elections, however, I felt a pressing need to expand my horizons. My maternal grandfather baked *kipferl* for the last Hapsburg emperor, and, even though that was a cen-

Avenue, perhaps because whenever I go for a dental X-ray the lead blanket reminds me of lying in my carriage half-buried under my mother's groceries. On the morning of my belated return visit, an elegant matron with a jeweled *bindi* and a Vuitton tote gave me directions to a few of her favorite shops, though she noted that I might find the merchandise somewhat



tury ago, I briefly thought that I might be eligible for Hungarian citizenship. When I couldn't find his birth certificate (his only legacies were a rolling pin and a pinochle deck), I resolved to start by living less provincially in my native city.

Perhaps most destinations in a globalized world are more mundane than one imagines. There is a realm, however, where silk, gold, and spices predominate over acrylic ponchos and distressed denim. Two dollars takes one there, aboard the No. 7 train to Jackson Heights. When my parents lived briefly in the neighborhood, fifty years ago, it was unremarkable except for its dullness. I can't recall going back since the subway cars had rattan seats and leather straps patinated with palm grease. But I have surprisingly vivid memories of shopping on Roosevelt

depleted, as it was the last day of Diwali.

Signs and flyers for the post-holiday sales were, indeed, just being posted in the dazzling bazaar of South Asian shops—scores in a four-block radius—that are clustered near the subway entrance at Seventy-fourth Street. (Diwali is an important Hindu “festival of light” that marks the beginning of the winter sowing season—and also, apparently, of the sewing season. Celebrants decorate their homes with oil lamps and votive candles, set off fireworks, exchange sweets, and buy new clothes or have them made.) But the clientele that morning was mainly veiled wives in black burkas and bearded men wearing shalwar kameez, most of them from Pakistan or Bangladesh, who were shopping for Eid-al-Fitr—the sighting of the new moon

SAUL STEINBERG, “WOMEN” (1950) © THE SAUL STEINBERG FOUNDATION

that marks the end of Ramadan. Eid, too, is an occasion for festive home decoration and new finery.

Ramesh Navani is an urbane partner in India Sari Palace, at 37-07 Seventy-fourth Street, one of the neighborhood's largest and oldest emporiums. He moved to Queens from his original shop, on lower Madison Avenue, in 1976, and he cheerfully invited blame "for starting the trend that made the neighborhood so crowded," though the ubiquity of young mothers pushing double prams probably has something to do with it. His customers are mostly from the subcontinent, but designers and stylists looking for interesting fabric also patronize the establishment. (Here one might note that the dimensions of a sari—six yards by forty-four inches—are ideal for making curtain panels, balloon shades, or table runners). One can buy an eighteen-foot swath of raw, Japanese, or tissue silk in a panoply of prints and colors for about \$60, though a gorgeous wedding sari of crimson damask embroidered with gold thread, which takes an artisan in Rajasthan three months to produce, can set a bride's father back \$1,500. The saris of Orissa resemble a cardiogram: a supple ticker of spidery, abstract notation on parchment-colored silk (\$250). And a blocked writer on one's gift list might feel inspired by a sari from West Bengal, where stories of village life from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are woven into the cloth.

In search of readier-to-wear gifts, I inspected a collection of Bandini-speckled crushed-silk scarves from Benares (\$45-\$75) at Sahil Sari Palace (37-39 Seventy-fourth Street), and dallied at the menswear counter, beguiled by the kurtas. A long, collarless tunic over drawstring pajama pants is \$25 in a linen-cotton check in ecru and gray, and \$85 in white silk with an embroidered placket. It's even safe to buy one for a mate who favors plaid flannel nightshirts from the L. L. Bean catalogue: if he won't wear it, you can.

Chandelier earrings predate the invention of the electric light by several millennia—the Indus Valley was the cradle of bling—and they are back in vogue. Bombay Jewelers (74-08 Thirty-seventh Road) is one of the myriad boutiques with mirrored walls and crystal fixtures which sell these and other timelessly glitzy baubles of

22k. gold, some encrusted with cabochon emeralds and rubies. A filigree "tumbler" cuff is \$2,500, and a selection of snake-like bangles are \$3,000-\$4,000 a pair. A handsome presentation box is free with any of the showy parures (a necklace and earrings) at Sonar Gao Jewelers (37-50 Seventy-fourth Street). Most Indian jewelry is sold by the gram, and I swiftly calculated that my own weight in gold is about \$798,000 before lunch. But "there's a lot of bargaining here," as K. C. Chouhan, the proprietor of Silk 'n Gold (37-49 Seventy-fourth Street), puts it, and for those hard-to-please pierced teens on your list diamond nose studs start at \$70.

To rest my eyes from the glare of so much splendor, I sought refuge in the cavernous Butala Emporium (37-46 Seventy-fourth Street)—a souk after my own heart, which is to say, a dusty dime store filled with offbeat stocking stuffers at single-digit prices. One could splurge with impunity on Ayurvedic beauty products, including herbal Kajal pencils (\$3.99) or a package of henna hand stencils (\$1.99). The wise men would have been happy to note that frankincense and myrrh incense are here \$4 a box.

It is well known that the Russian temperament tends toward excess at both ends of the spectrum: feats of stoicism and prodigies of indulgence. The indigenous gifts to be found in Brighton Beach (indigenous in spirit if not in provenance) don't rival the tsarist exorbitance of those at A La Vieille Russie (781 Fifth Avenue), where a collection of charming bagatelles by Fabergé includes a "stamp moistener" in salmon-pink enamel (\$26,000) and a rare, fin-de-siècle bell push—a silver pig with an electrified, garnet nose—(\$125,000). But the French influence on the Slavic imagination is still palpable at Magic Corsets (231 Brighton Beach Avenue), one of several lingerie shops that cater modishly to unblushing local appetites. *Ouverte* hosiery and fetish footwear are among its wares.

A short totter in stilettos takes one to Classic Fur (221 Brighton Beach Avenue). Its proprietors, Anatoly and Raya Alter, emigrated from Ukraine in the nineteen-seventies, and their establishment—a palatial duplex ablaze with fluorescence—has become a clubhouse, of sorts, for the make-goodniks of La Nouvelle Russie. The sumptuous array

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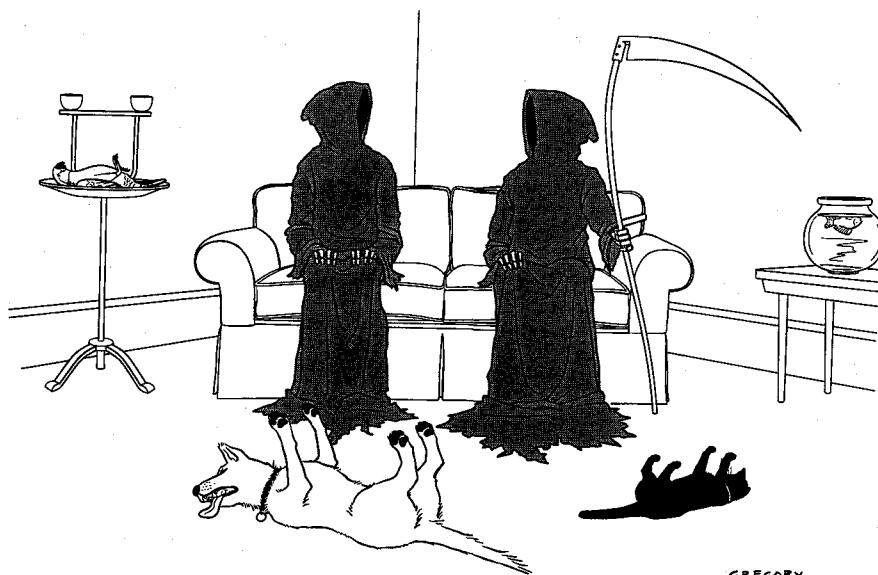
(Not So) Old Men and the Sea

By Pete Prestegard

The Perfect Gift!

"A fun read..." Bill Paratore, Editor, PassageMaker Magazine

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"I really don't think we need any more pets."

GREGORY

of fur and leather is rather like the inventory of a superior video store: Hollywood glamour in one section, Eastern-bloc realism in another, and a niche for adult cartoons. "Just name it, we've got it," the soignée Mrs. Alter said. A plaid fox poncho in neon blue, red, and yellow is \$2,000, and a classic floor-length sable coat lined with tulle lace (\$25,000) gives new meaning to the notion of deep pile.

Sheep's clothing isn't just a wolf's disguise. The warmth of shearling, I learned from the proprietor of Majestic Fashion (3165 Coney Island Avenue), depends upon the shagginess of the pelt. The long-haired Toscana breed yields desirably toasty jackets or coats in campfire colors—charcoal, marshmallow, and hot chocolate—which start here at \$300. Velvety, hooded strollers of reversible broadtail (from \$1,000) are a temptation for any consumer who, like me, finds herself invoking the old poacher's motto "Hung for the lamb, hung for the ewe." And the unsheepishly budget-minded can splurge on a mink ponytail holder: \$5-\$20.

I noticed plenty of white beards, if no Santas, on Thirteenth Avenue, the main shopping street of Borough Park. The old-fashioned hardware shops do a lively trade, as Orthodox Jewish couples marry young, and every family obeying the commandment to multiply needs four sets of cooking pots and dishes—one each for milk and meat, and two for Passover.

Fresh produce seems somewhat scarcer than bakery cookies (the absinthe of the Chosen People), and smoked fish, stuffed cabbage, dried fruit, sour pickles, nuts, hard candy, and sunflower seeds also abound. Bare heads, on the other hand, are as rare as cleavage or tattoos. On Sunday afternoons, Bencraft Hatters (4202 Thirteenth Avenue)—a haberdashery owned and run by three generations of the Goldstein family—is crowded with men in black shopping for beaver *streimels*. Strangers are welcome, and many come, as the Bencraft inventory is (you should excuse the expression) catholic. In addition to Borsalinos of supple felt or a Florentine straw (\$135-\$250), there are Stetsons, panamas, boaters, homburgs, and baseball caps in cashmere or wool; fedoras, grousers, berets, and newsboy caps of Irish tweed (\$60); Greek fisherman's caps with an embroidered brim; and a variety of cuffed fur hats with or without earflaps. The popular Rabbit Trooper is \$40.

I hoped I could find an antique menorah somewhere in Hasidic Brooklyn, though I got the same response everywhere I asked: "Good luck." But hundreds of candelabra, modern and traditional, most of Israeli provenance, are in stock at Eichler's (1401 Coney Island Avenue), a cornucopia of Judaica. Much of the merchandise and literature is esoteric to the unobservant (if anyone on your list is in need of a *tzitzit*, you have come to the right place), but you can

also stock up on Hanukkah toys, cards, candles, music, chocolate coins, and folkloric gifts like a hand-painted latke dish (\$30) or a Star of David "tidbit" server (\$6.99). A low menorah of lightweight sterling that burns oil in liquid or cartridge form (\$290) was anomalous in its simplicity, and the salesman—somewhat mystified—told me that it was selling briskly. "It looks like Art Nouveau," I said. "Never heard of him," he replied.

Down the street at Silver Island (1435 Coney Island Avenue), a small boutique with mahogany woodwork, Israel Shtaubber polishes and restores heirlooms in addition to selling traditionally wrought new pieces such as Passover plates, mezuzahs, matzo bins, challah knives, and *tsinder* (candle lighters.) Filigree menorahs start at \$100. For \$300-\$2,000, one can buy an impressive "wine fountain" that, with Rube Goldberg efficiency, automatically dispenses a measured dose of Manischewitz to a row of thimble-size kiddush cups without spilling a drop.

Fifth Avenue in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, is the main artery of a Mexican barrio whose hilly streets of pastel and brick bowfront houses slope down toward the water, and whose butcher shops sell *mofongo* and *lechón*. Holiday shoppers were browsing for party favors at Irma's Craft Store (505 Forty-sixth Street), a dainty boutique afloat in tulle and ribbon which specializes in piñatas, wedding-cake decorations, First Communion crowns, and the frills necessary for a proper *quinceañera* (the fifteenth-birthday bash at which a Latin girl comes of age).

One could get into shape for a New Year's Eve on the town with a course of dance lessons (four for \$55) at Salsa de Hoy (504 Forty-sixth Street) or, depending on one's date, karate at the martial-arts school that shares the studio. A custom-made mariachi suit—slim pants or skirt and an embroidered bolero festooned with golden chains and *botonaduras*—is about \$450 at Zapateria Mexico (4505 Fifth Avenue), which also carries such *vagüero* essentials as fringed suede chaps (\$90-\$120) and tequila-bottle holsters of tooled leather (\$80), with cartridge belts designed to accommodate shot glasses. Machismo has its charms. Among them is a solid-gold rooster on a twenty-four-inch chain

THE YEAR IN

BLACK & WHITE

2005



ED NAZARKO Cereus Bud



YOU HAVE REDEFINED THE
SNAPSHOT. YOU CAPTURE
YOUR IMAGINATION. YOU
ARE YOUR OWN FAVORITE
PHOTOGRAPHER. YOU SEE
COLORS IN BLACK AND
WHITE. YOU HAVE PROOF
FOR THE UNCONVINCED.

YOU KEEP PIECES OF THE
WORLD IN YOUR POCKET.
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PRINT YOUR DAYDREAMS.
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WHITE ISN'T OLD, IT'S ART.
YOU CLICK, PRINT, INVENT.



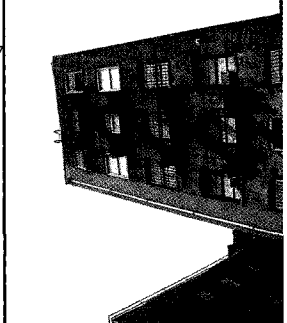
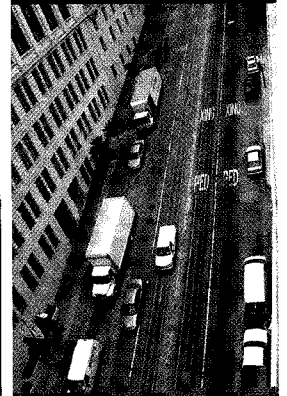


VADIM ZALIVA untitled

JANUARY

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
						1 New Year's Day Kwanzaa ends
2	3	4	5	6 Epiphany	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	18	19	20 Inauguration Day Eid al-Adha begins at sundown	21 Eid al-Adha	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Tilting the camera up or down can
make a subject bigger or smaller.





+ JEFF KORTE *Cascade Ice, Lake Superior*

FEBRUARY

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
		1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5
6	7	8 Mardi Gras Nirvana Day (Buddhism)	9 Ash Wednesday Chinese New Year	10 Hijra New Year (Islam)	11	12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
13	14 Valentine's Day	15 Susan B. Anthony Day	16	17	18 Ashura begins at sundown	19 Ashura
20	21 President's Day	22 George Washington's Birthday	23	24	25	26
27	28					

Shooting translucent objects
captures natural illumination.



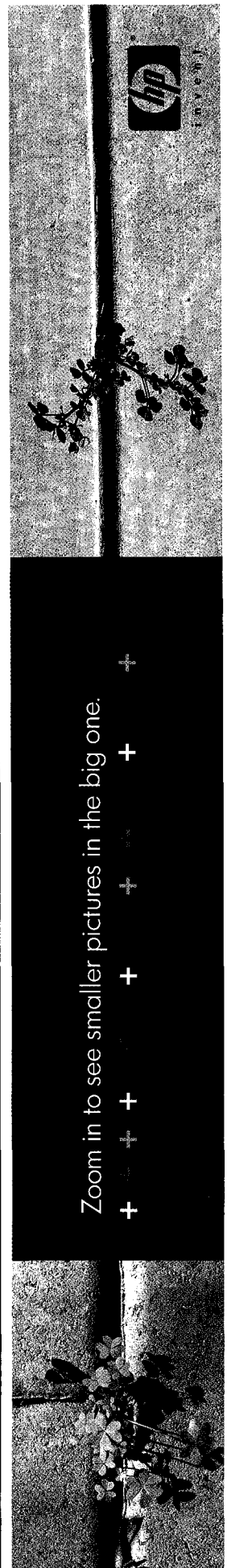


+ ED NAZARKO Cereus Bud

MARCH

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 <i>The Ides of March</i>	16	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i>	18	19
20 <i>Palm Sunday Vernal Equinox</i>	21 <i>Bahá'í New Year</i>	22	23	24 <i>Purim begins at sundown</i>	25 <i>Purim Good Friday</i>	26
27 <i>Easter Sunday</i>	28	29	30	31		

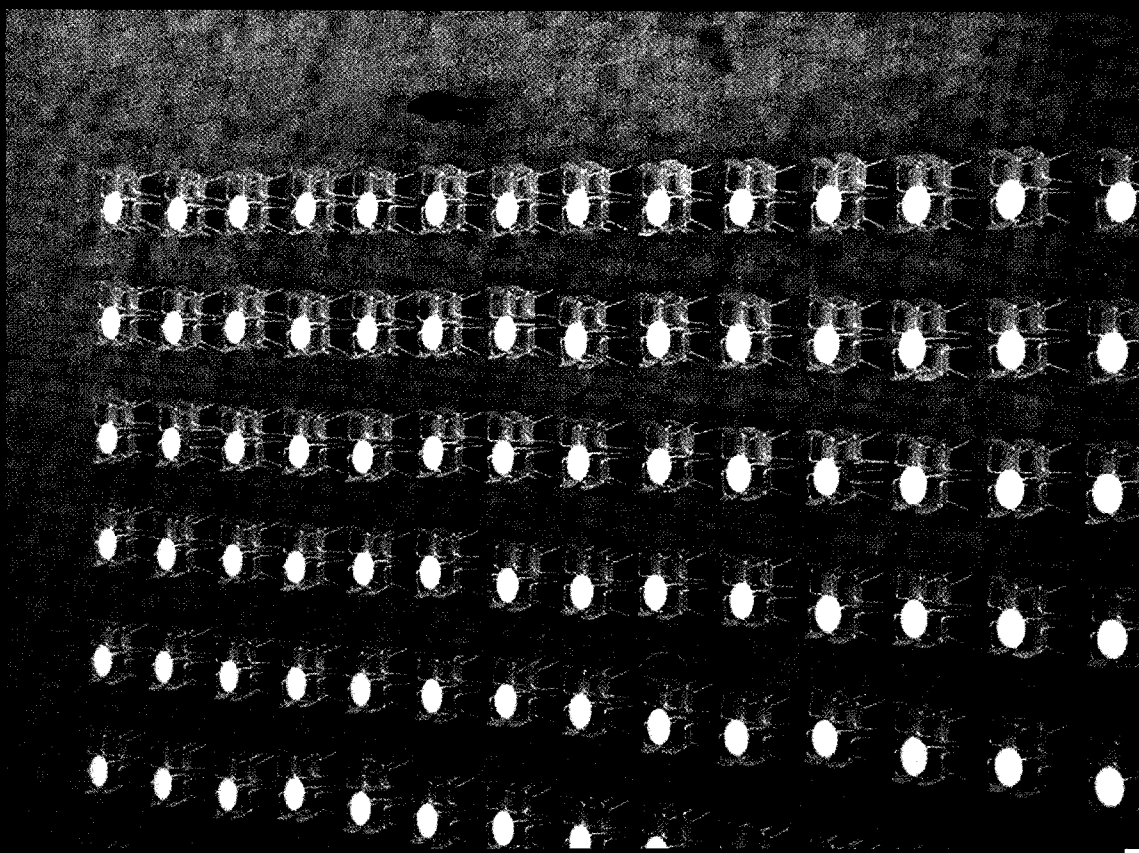


Zoom in to see smaller pictures in the big one.

+ + + + + + + +



ENVIRONMENT



+ DANIELS St. Mark's Square, Venice

APRIL

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
					1 <i>April Fools' Day</i>	2
3 <i>Daylight Saving Time begins</i>	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 <i>Federal income taxes due</i>	16
17	18	19	20 <i>Mawlid at-Nabi begins at sundown</i>	21 <i>Mawlid at-Nabi</i>	22 <i>Earth Day</i>	23 <i>Passover - first seder</i>
24 <i>Passover - second seder</i>	25	26	27 <i>Administrative Professionals Day</i>	28	29 <i>Arbor Day</i>	30

Shooting subjects with a natural contrast will make them appear three-dimensional.



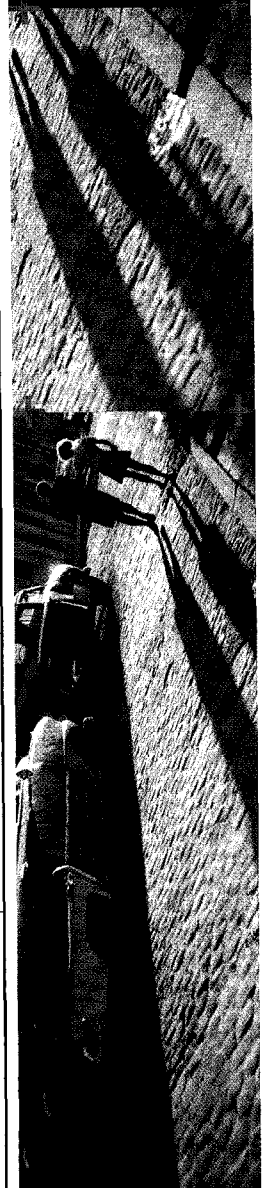


+ PAUL CARTER / Magic Flute

MAY

2005

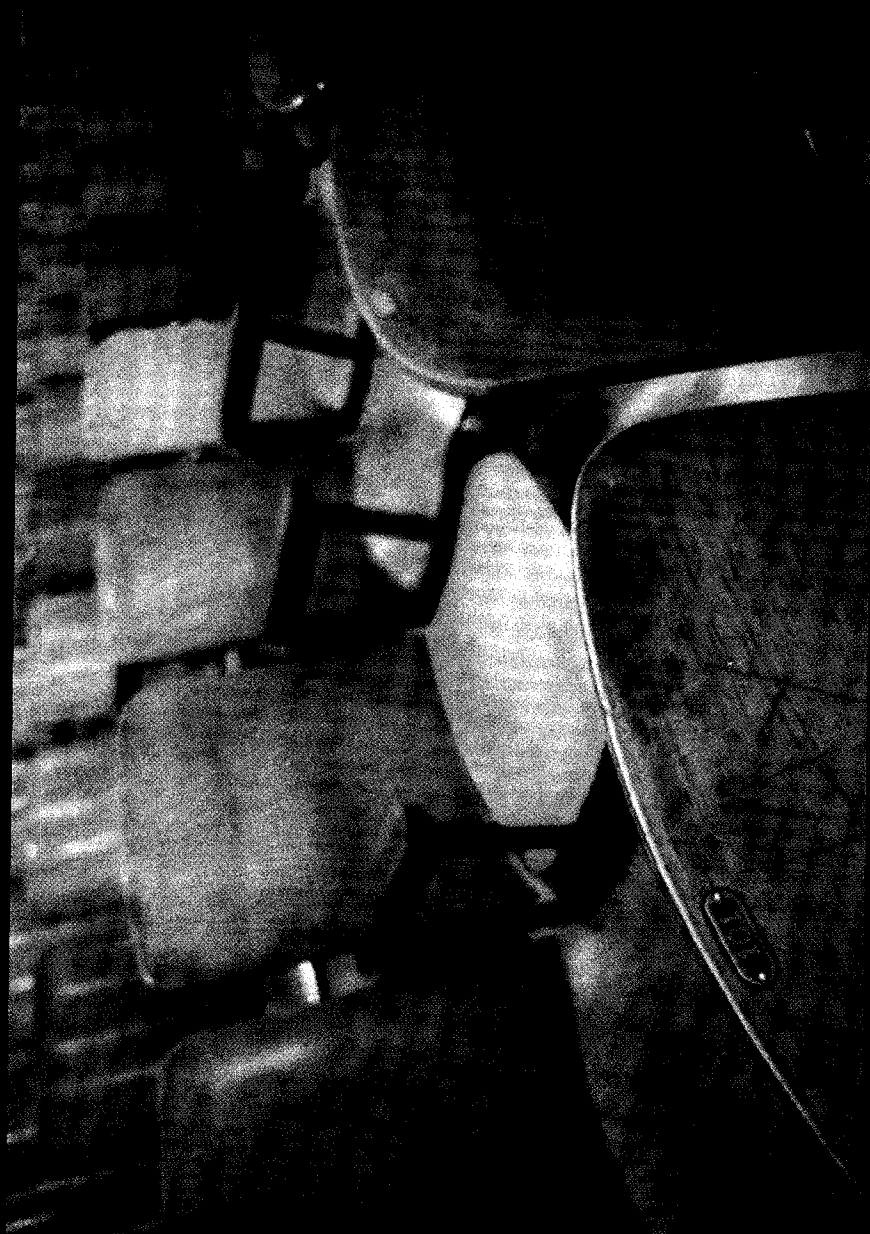
sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
1 May Day Passover ends at sundown	2	3	4	5 Cinco de Mayo Ascension Thursday	6 Nurses Day	7
8 Mother's Day	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Whit Sunday (Pentecost)	16	17	18	19	20	21 Armed Forces Day
22 Vesak (Buddha's birth)	23 Victoria Day (Canada, UK)	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 Memorial Day	31				



Taking pictures midday
can cast long shadows.



PAUL SHUSTAK *united*



ESTHER MONTORO *The Waiting*

JUNE

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 <i>King Kamehameha Day</i>	11
12 <i>Shavuot begins at sundown</i>	13 <i>Shavuot</i>	14 <i>Shavuot Flag Day</i>	15	16 <i>Bloomsday</i>	17	18
19 <i>Father's Day Juneteenth (liberation of slaves)</i>	20	21 <i>Summer Solstice</i>	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



Bring the camera closer to
the subject to clarify detail.





+ LAURA ANELLO First Date

JULY

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
					1 <i>Canada Day</i>	2
3	4 <i>Independence Day</i>	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 <i>Bastille Day</i>	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



Crop a photo in a creative way
to create a unique narrative.





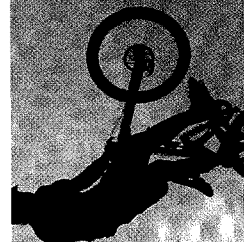
+ WILLIAM KOPLITZ *Sailboats on Siesta Beach*

AUGUST

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 <i>Tisha B'ov</i>	8	9	10	11	12	13 <i>Tisha B'ov begins at sundown</i>
14 <i>Tisha B'ov</i>	15 <i>Assumption</i>	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

A light backdrop will silhouette the primary subject of a picture.



KIMBERLY BEIL Carlin Durne at Ellwood Mesa, Goleta, CA



CAMILLE SEAMAN Svalbard Beach



SEPTEMBER

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 <i>Labor Day</i>	6	7	8	9	10
11 <i>Grandparents Day</i>	12	13	14	15	16	17 <i>Citizenship Day</i>
18	19	20	21	22 <i>Autumnal Equinox</i>	23 <i>Native American Day</i>	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

On an overcast day or at dusk,
natural light will be diffused.





+ YARON KIDRON Morning Stillness

OCTOBER

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
						1
2	3 Ramadan begins at sundown Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown	4 Rosh Hashanah	5 Rosh Hashanah	6	7	8
9	10 Columbus Day	11	12 Yom Kippur begins at sundown	13 Yom Kippur	14	15
16 Bosses Day	17 Sukkot begins at sundown	18 Sukkot	19 Sukkot	20	21	22
23	24 United Nations Day	25 Simchat Torah begins at sundown	26 Simchat Torah	27	28	29
30 Daylight Saving Time ends	31 Halloween					





+ TOM CHAMBERS *Way Out West*

NOVEMBER

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
		1 <i>All Saints Day</i>	2 <i>All Souls Day</i>	3 <i>Ramadan ends at sundown Eid al-Fitr begins at sundown</i>	4	5 <i>Guy Fawkes Day (UK)</i>
6	7	8	9	10	11 <i>Veterans Day</i>	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 <i>Thanksgiving</i>	25	26
27 <i>First Sunday of Advent</i>	28	29	30			



Print multiple pictures
to express a single idea.



COMPACT





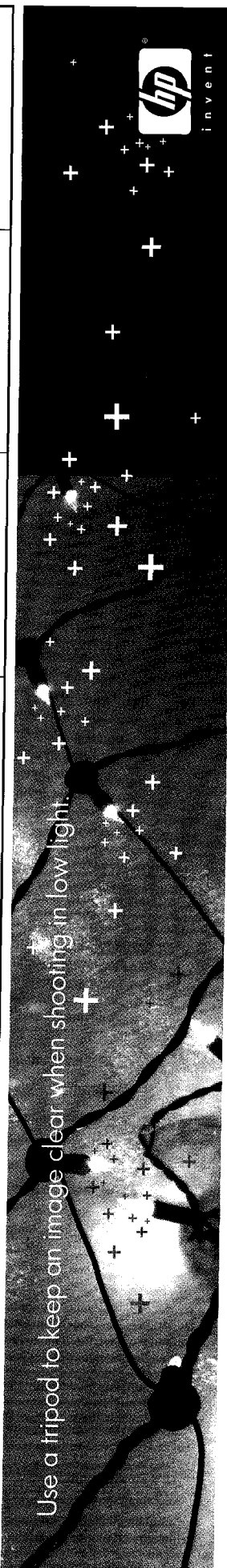
+ KENNETH SAMCOE White Walls

DECEMBER

2005

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Bill of Rights Day	16	17
18	19	20	21 Winter Solstice	22	23	24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas Day Hanukkah begins at sundown	26 Kwanzaa begins Boxing Day (Canada, UK)	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

Use a tripod to keep an image clear when shooting in low light.



+
LAURA STORY MELTON Our



you
+
hp

from A&M Jewelry (4814 Fifth Avenue), where one can also find a large selection of I.D. necklaces and jumbo-diameter hoop earrings.

One is always intrigued by a shop that takes over the premises of a private house. It offers the mildly voyeuristic thrill of gaining entrée to an exclusive world. Ralph Lauren perpetrates that clubby illusion at his flagship store, in the Rhinelander mansion, and two enterprising Harlem partners—Greta Wallace and Princess Jenkins—have achieved a similar feat on a cozier scale at The Brownstone (2032 Fifth Avenue). Its hive of bedrooms and parlors with sloping floors and Victorian woodwork now shelters a gallery of Afrocentric fashion and crafts. The convivial atmosphere is less that of a commercial enterprise than of a bohemian boarding house where “guest designers” come and go. Most of The Brownstone’s offerings are one or two of a kind, and they included, on a recent visit, romantic slip dresses made to order of vintage-looking floral silk by Edwing d’Angelo; chunky, hand-knitted shrugs that Wallace sells under her private label, Simply Greta (\$95); surreal necklaces of leather tendrils by Imani (a mother-daughter team) that resemble faux coral or false eyelashes (\$375–\$575); and Myra Kooy’s exuberant satchels of fur-trimmed snakeskin or ragged suède with handles of copper plumbing pipe (\$150).

Around the corner, at Djema Imports (6 East 125th Street), Moctar Yara, the gracious proprietor, stocks ethnic textiles from everywhere in Africa, and makes a speciality of mud cloths from his native Mali. The resident tailor will run up a handsome brocade caftan (\$180) or any other garment that a customer desires, using house fabric. A yard of batik from Burkina Faso or of vibrant West African cotton is \$5. Thousands of prints are stacked floor to ceiling, like paintings at the Louvre, and Yara’s advice is to take one’s time and to look “with soft eyes.” Gift shoppers in a rush could choose to focus on the old masters. Sumptuary laws once restricted the wearing of kente cloth—a strip-woven patchwork—to Ghanaian royalty. A regal precolonial spread in ochre and saffron would fit a queen-size bed (\$800, though bargaining is not frowned upon). Artisans of the Kuba tribe in Congo appliquéd nar-

row panels of homespun raffia with graffiti-like, abstract cutouts that echoed the markings on a scarified Kuba body. Fine vintage examples of Kuba cloth invite comparison with the mysterious calligraphy of Cy Twombly. (A Twombly fetches about a million; a forty-eight-inch length of Kuba cloth is \$600.)

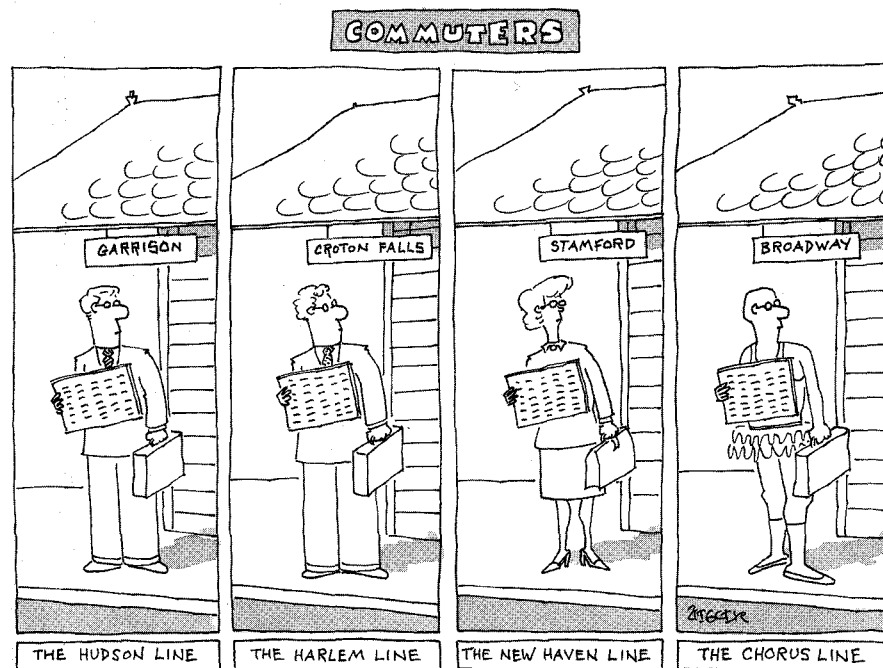
Harlemites looking for a chic accessory patronize The Scarf Lady (408 Lenox Avenue), a compact shop as smartly fitted and packed as a steamer trunk. A handwoven latticework muffler of cashmere and angora (\$78) is one of more than five hundred wraps. Paulette Gay, the owner, also sells interesting hats, handbags, and jewelry, some by community artisans. An abalone-and-leather bib (\$250) and long *sautoirs* of baby-tooth beads in risotto colors (\$45) tempted me to go back for seconds.

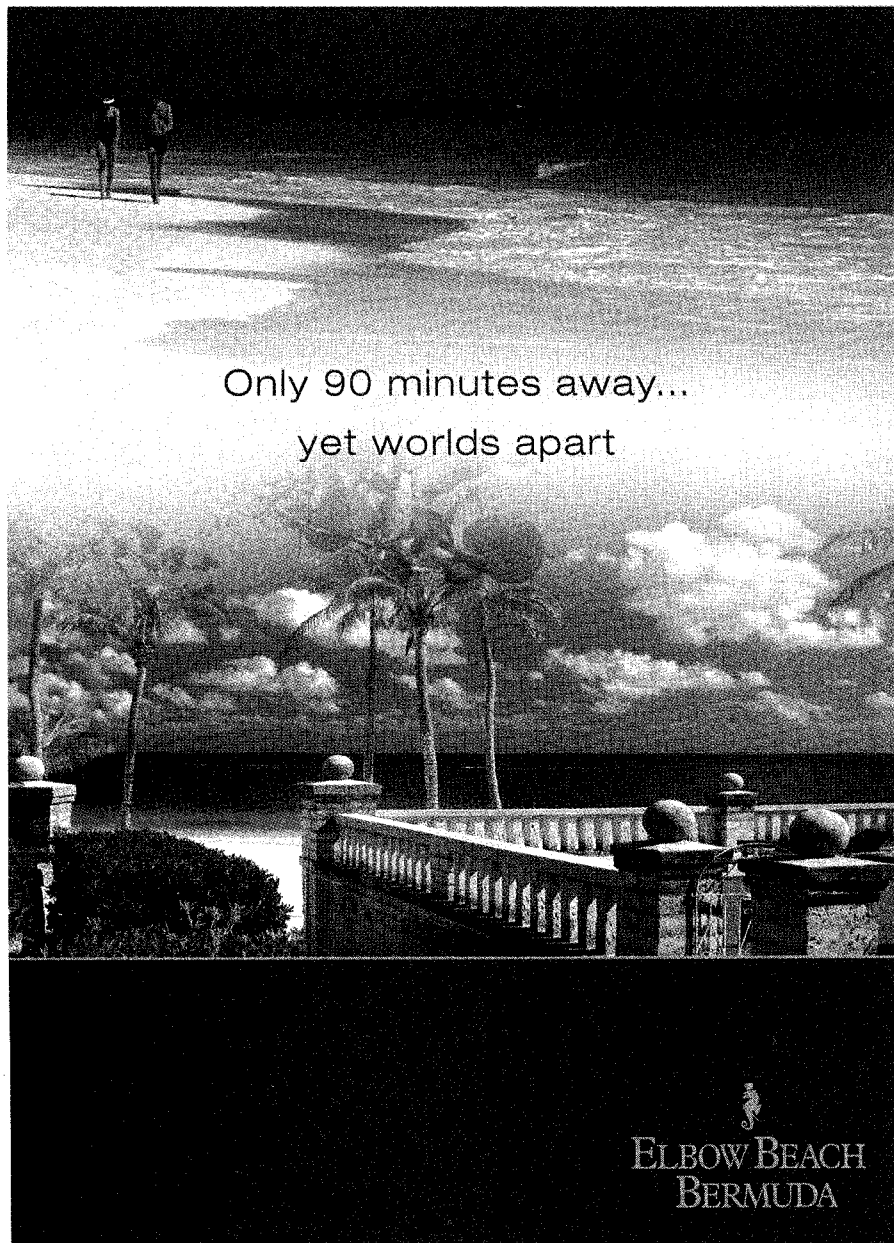
Ten stops on the Lexington Avenue express whisk one from Harlem to Brooklyn, but it is more fun to treat the local like an elevator in a department store—pushing all the buttons and exploring the temptations on every floor. At 116th Street, I turned east to Casa El Rodeo (228 East 116th), where I found a selection of handmade cowboy boots in exotic skins like ostrich and manta ray; red and blue crocodile belts; and snappy crocodile cross-trainers. A few blocks to the west, the holiday season was in full blast at El Barrio Music Center (100 East 116th Street), which carries the neighborhood’s

largest selection of *jibara*—the folk music of Puerto Rico. A tape that features *los dos grandes* of the genre, La Candelaria and Ramito, singing Christmas songs, is \$9.99, and would fit neatly in a stocking with a pair of rawhide maracas trimmed with cow hair (\$13.99 for two).

When the jam-packed No. 6 broke down at Fifty-ninth Street, I took it as a sign to recover my serenity before plunging into the streets of Chinatown. Takashimaya (693 Fifth Avenue) is my favorite place for retail meditation, even if the Japanese ethos of less is more does not pertain to the pricing. An aesthete on one’s list would love a lacquer service plate by Kunikatsu Seto, a master of the art (\$1,800); one of his sake bowls (\$1,200); or an antique basket with a handle of bamboo root (\$1,400–\$4,200) which dates to the late nineteenth century and thus qualifies as a genuine gift of the Meiji. And any of the vintage lacquer trays—footed or flat—with a surface rippled by the carver’s blade (\$45–\$250) would make an appropriate platter on which to pass a selection of exquisitely wrapped sweets from Minamoto Kitchoan (608 Fifth Avenue).

Chinatown’s vitality is inexhaustible, and so are its gift shops. The challenge is to sift the treasure from the dross, but the proprietors of Kam Man Food Products (200 Canal Street) have already done so. Theirs is a vast and orderly bargain wonderland of well-designed Asian housewares. As I was going downstairs,





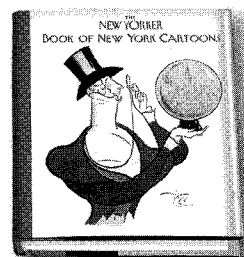
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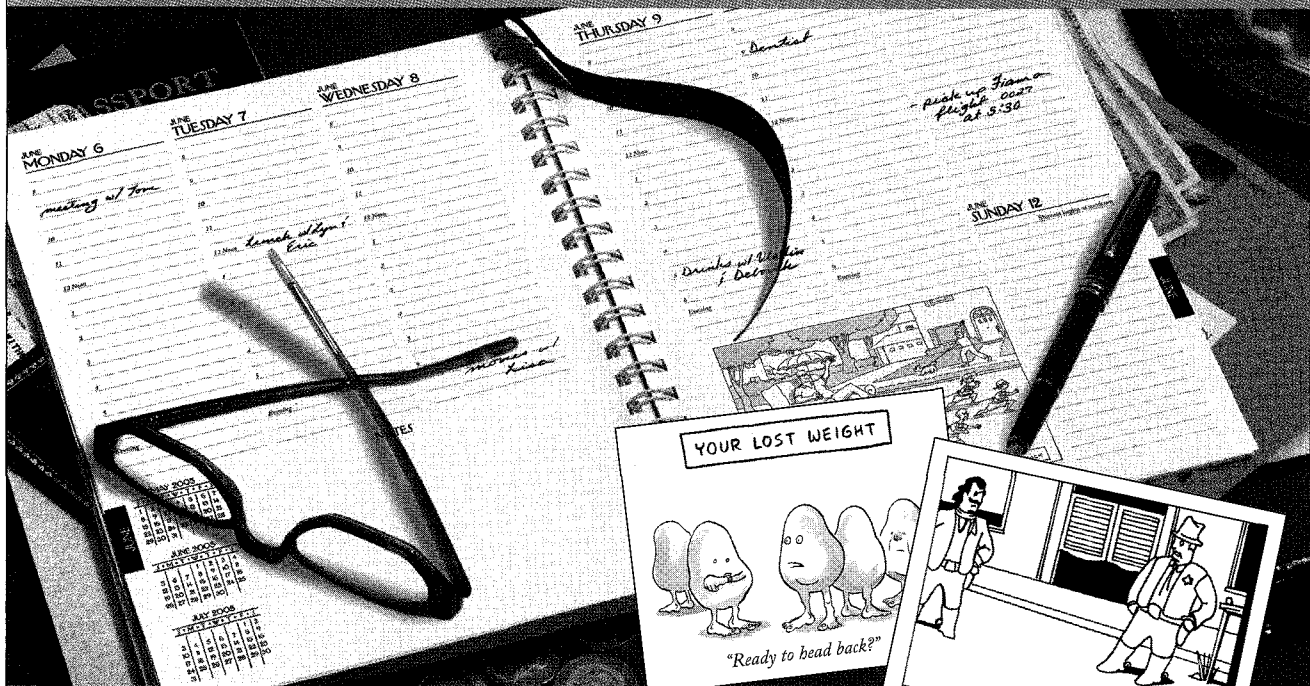
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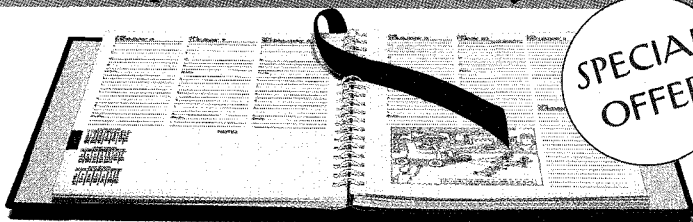
two employees of the food department brushed past me carrying a roasted pig, and its aroma whetted my appetite for some new dinner plates. It was hard to choose, however, among the traditional cherry-blossom or bamboo patterns; the cracked glazes (celadon, coral, sapphire); and the square or rectangular plates in black and white (\$4.25-\$16.95). A service of delicately veined trompe-l'œil porcelain leaves was especially fanciful. The biscuit-and-seaweed-colored bowls and teacups had "shrivelled" rims, and the serving dishes had stem handles (\$7.95-\$13.95). Any child growing up in a takeout culture should master the use of chopsticks at an early age. A training set in pink or blue plastic (\$3.95) would tickle a tot just learning the difference between potstickers and shumai. But fetching miso bowls decorated with bears, kittens, or whales (\$3.95-\$6.95) are also suitable for jello.

The Santas were tolling their bells and the lights of Yorkville were twinkling when I emerged from the subway at East Eighty-sixth Street with my bags of loot. (I also bought a rice-paper dragon kite for \$12.50 at Wing On Wo & Company, at 26 Mott Street, a shop in business since 1925, and a selection of tiny creatures—crickets, a flamingo, and an elephant—woven of palm fronds by Yu Shao Hua, a "grass artist" who sells his enchanting work at the corner of Canal and Mott Streets.) My home turf, as it happens, was once an outpost of the Hapsburg Empire, and I live two blocks from the brownstone where my grandparents settled, in 1890. Though the savory Magyar spice shops and the less than savory beer gardens where the Bund held secret rallies in the nineteen-thirties have long since closed, one can still buy sweet or hot paprika, smoked sausage, and poppy-seed strudel at the Yorkville Meat Emporium (1560 Second Avenue), which is run by the Gubicza family, and several varieties of Christmas stollen at the venerable Schaller & Weber (1654 Second Avenue), a German gourmet shop that also sells festive boxes of *Glücksschweinchen* (candy pigs) and Austrian chocolates. There wasn't any fresh-baked *kipferl*, but at Blue Danube Gifts (217 East Eighty-third Street) I found a recipe for vanilla *kifli* in an illustrated cookbook of holiday desserts, "66 Karácsonyi Édesség," by Lajos Mari and Hemzo Karoly (\$24). Now all I have to do is learn Hungarian. ♦

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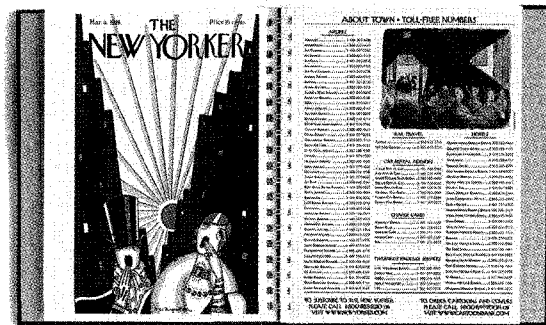
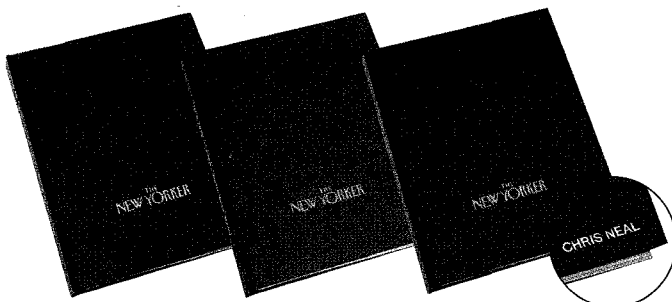
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MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

The strange death of a Sherlock Holmes fanatic.

BY DAVID GRANN

Richard Lancelyn Green, the world's foremost expert on Sherlock Holmes, believed that he had finally solved the case of the missing papers. Over the past two decades, he had been looking for a trove of letters, diary entries, and manuscripts written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Holmes. The archive was estimated to be worth nearly four million dollars, and was said by some to carry a deadly curse, like the one in the most famous Holmes story, "The Hound of the Baskervilles."

The papers had disappeared after Conan Doyle died, in 1930, and without them no one had been able to write a definitive biography—a task that Green was determined to complete. Many scholars feared that the archive had been discarded or destroyed; as the *London Times* noted earlier this year, its whereabouts had become "a mystery as tantalizing as any to unfold at 221B Baker Street," the fictional den of Holmes and his fellow-sleuth, Dr. Watson.

Not long after Green launched his investigation, he discovered that one of Conan Doyle's five children, Adrian, had, with the other heirs' agreement, stashed the papers in a locked room of a château that he owned in Switzerland. Green then learned that Adrian had spirited some of the papers out of the château without his siblings' knowledge, hoping to sell them to collectors. In the midst of this scheme, he died of a heart attack—giving rise to the legend of the curse. After Adrian's death, the papers apparently vanished. And whenever Green tried to probe further he found himself caught in an impenetrable web of heirs—including a self-styled Russian princess—who seemed to have deceived and double-crossed each other in their efforts to control the archive.

For years, Green continued to sort through evidence and interview relatives, until one day the muddled trail led to London—and the doorstep of Jean

Conan Doyle, the youngest of the author's children. Tall and elegant, with silver hair, she was an imposing woman in her late sixties. ("Something very strong and forceful seems to be at the back of that wee body," her father had written of Jean when she was five. "Her will is tremendous.") Whereas her brother Adrian had been kicked out of the British Navy for insubordination, and her elder brother Denis was a playboy who had sat out the Second World War in America, she had become an officer in the Royal Air Force, and was honored, in 1963, as a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

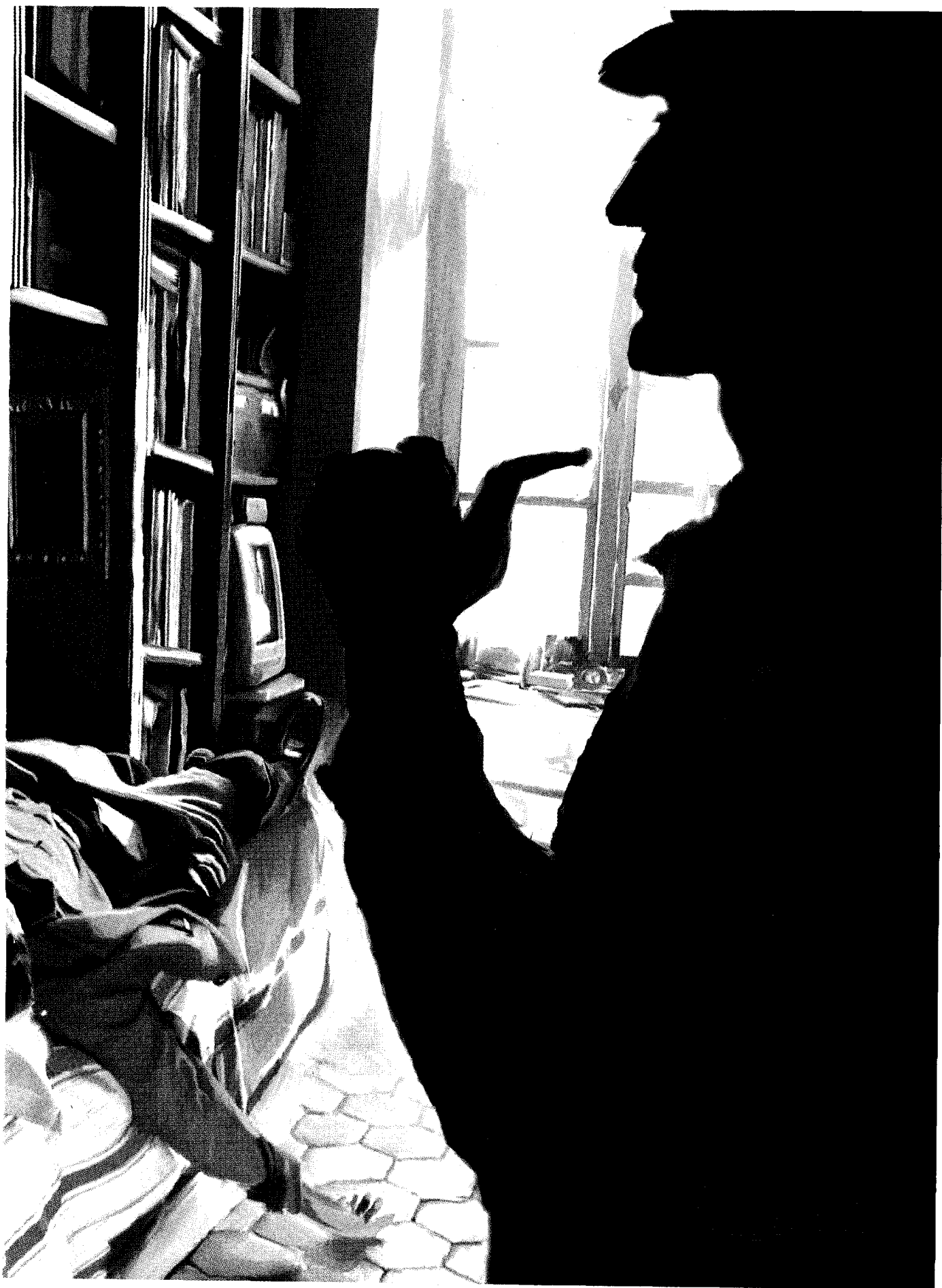
She invited Green into her flat, where a portrait of her father, with his walrus mustache, hung near the fireplace. Green had almost as great an interest in her father as she did, and she began sharing her memories, as well as family photographs. She asked him to return, and one day, Green later told friends, she showed him some boxes that had been stored in a London solicitor's office. Peering inside them, he said, he had glimpsed part of the archive. Dame Jean informed him that, because of an ongoing family dispute, she couldn't yet allow him to read the papers, but she said that she intended to bequeath nearly all of them to the British Library, so that scholars could finally examine them. After she died, in 1997, Green eagerly awaited their transfer—but nothing happened.

Then, last March, Green opened the *London Sunday Times* and was shocked to read that the lost archive had "turned up" at Christie's auction house and was to be sold, in May, for millions of dollars by three of Conan Doyle's distant relatives; instead of going to the British Library, the contents would be scattered among private collectors around the world, who might keep them inaccessible to scholars. Green was sure that a mistake had been made, and hurried to



Richard Lancelyn Green was leading the effort

LOUIS BACHELOT



p the sale of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's private papers. He told a reporter from the London Times that "something" might happen to him.

Christie's to inspect the materials. Upon his return, he told friends that he was certain that many of the papers were the same as those he had uncovered. What's more, he alleged, they had been stolen—and he had proof.

Over the next few days, he approached members of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, one of hundreds of fan clubs devoted to the detective. (Green had once been chairman.) He alerted other so-called Sherlockians, including various American members of the Baker Street Irregulars, an invitation-only group that was founded in 1934 and named after the street urchins Holmes regularly employed to ferret out information. Green also contacted the more orthodox scholars of Conan Doyle, or Doyleans, about the sale. (Unlike Green, who moved between the two camps, many Doyleans distanced themselves from the Sherlockians, who often treated Holmes as if he were a real detective and refused to mention Conan Doyle by name.)

Green shared with these scholars what he knew about the archive's provenance, revealing what he considered the most damning piece of evidence: a copy of Dame Jean's will, which stated, "I give to The British Library all . . . my late father's original papers, personal manuscripts, diaries, engagement books, and writings." Determined to block the auction, the makeshift group of amateur sleuths presented its case to Members of Parliament. Toward the end of the month, as the group's campaign intensified and its objections appeared in the press, Green hinted to his sister, Priscilla West, that someone was threatening him. Later, he sent her a cryptic note containing three phone numbers and the message "PLEASE KEEP THESE NUMBERS SAFE." He also called a reporter from the *London Times*, warning that "something" might happen to him.

On the night of Friday, March 26th, he had dinner with a longtime friend, Lawrence Keen, who later said that Green had confided in him that "an

American was trying to bring him down." After the two men left the restaurant, Green told Keen that they were being followed, and pointed to a car behind them.

The same evening, Priscilla West phoned her brother, and got his answering machine. She called repeatedly the next morning, but he still didn't pick up. Alarmed, she went to his house and knocked on the door; there was no response. After several more attempts, she called the police, who came and broke open the entrance. Downstairs, the police found the body of Green lying on his bed, surrounded by Sherlock Holmes books and posters, with a cord wrapped around his neck. He had been garroted.

"I will lay out the whole case for you," John Gibson, one of Green's closest friends, told me when I phoned him shortly after learning of Green's death. Gibson had written several books with Green, including "My Evening with Sherlock Holmes," a 1981 collection of parodies and pastiches of the detective stories. With a slight stammer, Gibson said of his friend's death, "It's a complete and utter mystery."

Not long after, I travelled to Great Bookham, a village thirty miles south of London, where Gibson lives. He was waiting for me when I stepped off the train. He was tall and rail-thin, and everything about him—narrow shoulders, long face, unruly gray hair—seemed to slouch forward, as if he were supported by an invisible cane. "I have a file for you," he said, as we drove off in his car. "As you'll see, there are plenty of clues and not a lot of answers."

He sped through town, past a twelfth-century stone church and a row of cottages, until he stopped at a red brick house surrounded by hedges. "You don't mind dogs, I hope," he said. "I've two cocker spaniels. I only wanted one but the person I got them from said that they were inseparable, and so I took them both and they've been fighting ever since."

When he opened the front door, both spaniels leaped on us, then at each other. They trailed us into the living room, which was filled with piles of antique books, some reaching to the ceiling. Among the stacks was a near-complete set of *The Strand Magazine*, in which the Holmes stories were serialized at the



"We've decided to cut back and have Christmas every other year."

turn of the twentieth century; a single issue, which used to sell for half a shilling, is now worth as much as five hundred dollars. "Altogether, there must be about sixty thousand books," Gibson said.

We sat on a couch and he opened his case file, carefully spreading the pages around him. "All right, dogs. Don't disturb us," he said. He looked up at me. "Now I'll tell you the whole story."

Gibson said that he had attended the coroner's inquest and taken careful notes, and as he spoke he picked up a magnifying glass beside him and peered through it at several crumpled pieces of paper. "I write everything on scraps," he said. The police, he said, had found only a few unusual things at the scene. There was the cord around Green's neck—a black shoelace. There was a wooden spoon near his hand, and several stuffed animals on the bed. And there was a partially empty bottle of gin.

The police found no sign of forced entry and assumed that Green had committed suicide. Yet there was no note, and Sir Colin Berry, the president of the British Academy of Forensic Sciences, testified to the coroner that, in his thirty-year career, he had seen only one suicide by garroting. "One," Gibson repeated. Self-garroting is extremely difficult to do, he explained; people who attempt it typically pass out before they are asphyxiated. Moreover, in this instance, the cord was not a thick rope but a shoelace, making the feat even more unlikely.

Gibson reached in his file and handed me a sheet of paper with numbers on it. "Take a look," he said. "My phone records." The records showed that he and Green had spoken repeatedly during the week before his death; if the police had bothered to obtain Green's records, Gibson went on, they would no doubt show that Green had called him only hours before he died. "I was probably the last person to speak to him," he said. The police, however, had never questioned him.

During one of their last conversations about the auction, Gibson recalled, Green had said he was afraid of something.

"You've got nothing to worry about," Gibson told him.

"No, I'm *worried*," Green said.

"What? You fear for your life?"

"I do."

Gibson said that, at the time, he didn't take the threat seriously but advised Green not to answer his door unless he was sure who it was.

Gibson glanced at his notes. There was something else, he said, something critical. On the eve of his death, he reminded me, Green had spoken to his friend Keen about an "American" who was trying to ruin him. The following day, Gibson said, he had called Green's house and heard a strange greeting on the answering machine. "Instead of getting Richard's voice in this sort of Oxford accent, which had been on the machine for a decade," Gibson recalled, "I got an American voice that said, 'Sorry, not available.' I said, 'What the hell is going on?' I thought I must've dialled the wrong number. So I dialled really slowly again. I got the American voice. I said, 'Christ almighty.'"

Gibson said that Green's sister had heard the same recorded greeting, which is one reason that she had rushed to his house. Reaching into his file, Gibson handed me several more documents. "Make sure you keep them in chronological order," he said. There was a copy of Jean Conan Doyle's will, several newspaper clippings on the auction, an obituary, and a Christie's catalogue.

That was pretty much all he had. The police, Gibson said, had not conducted any forensic tests or looked for fingerprints. And the coroner—who had once attended a meeting of the Sherlock Holmes Society to conduct a mock inquest of the murder from a Conan Doyle story in which a corpse is discovered in a locked room—found himself stymied. Gibson said that the coroner had noted that there was not enough evidence to ascertain what had happened, and, as a result, the official verdict regarding whether Green had killed himself or been murdered was left open.

Within hours of Green's death, Sherlockians seized upon the mystery, as if it were another case in the canon. In a Web chat room, one person, who called himself "inspector," wrote, "As for self-garroting, it is like trying to choke oneself to death by your own hands." Others invoked the "curse," as if only the supernatural could explain it. Gibson handed me an article from a British tabloid that was headlined " 'CURSE OF CONAN DOYLE' STRIKES HOLMES EXPERT."

"So what do you think?" Gibson asked.

"I'm not sure," I said.

Later, we went through the evidence again. I asked Gibson if he knew whose phone numbers were on the note that Green had sent to his sister.

Gibson shook his head. "It hadn't come up at the inquest," he said.

"What about the American voice on the answering machine?" I asked. "Do we know who that is?"

"Unfortunately, not a clue. To me that's the strangest and most telling piece of evidence. Did Richard put that on his machine? What was he trying to tell us? Did the murderer put it on there? And, if so, why would he do that?"

I asked if Green had ever displayed any irrational behavior. "No, never," he said. "He was the most levelheaded man I ever met."

He noted that Priscilla West had testified at the inquest that her brother had no history of depression. Indeed, Green's physician wrote to the court to say that he had not treated Green for any illnesses for a decade.

"One last question," I said. "Was anything taken out of the apartment?"

"Not that we know of. Richard had a valuable collection of Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle books, and nothing appears to be missing."

As Gibson drove me back to the train station, he said, "Please, you must stay on the case. The police seem to have let poor Richard down." Then he advised, "As Sherlock Holmes says, 'When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.'"

Some facts about Richard Green are easy to discern—those which illuminate the circumstances of his life, rather than the circumstances of his death. He was born on July 10, 1953; he was the youngest of three children; his father was Roger Lancelyn Green, a best-selling children's author who popularized the Homeric myths and the legend of King Arthur, and who was a close friend of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien; and Richard was raised near Liverpool, on land that had been given to his ancestors in 1093, and where his family had resided ever since.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, who was the

American consul in Liverpool in the eighteen-fifties, visited the house one summer, and he later described it in his "English Notebooks":

We passed through a considerable extent of private road, and finally drove through a lawn, shaded with trees, and closely shaven, and reached the door of Poulton Hall. Part of the mansion is three or four hundred years old. . . . There is [a] curious, old, stately staircase, with a twisted balustrade, much like that of the old Province House in Boston. The drawing-room looks like a very handsome modern room, being beautifully painted, gilded, and paper-hung, with a white-marble fire-place, and rich furniture; so that the impression is that of newness, not of age.

By the time Richard was born, however, the Green family was, as one relative told me, "very English—a big house and no money." The curtains were thin, the carpets were threadbare, and a cold draft often swirled through the corridors.

Green, who had a pale, pudgy face, was blind in one eye from a childhood accident, and wore spectacles with tinted lenses. (One friend told me that, even as an adult, Green resembled "the god of Pan," with "cherubic-like features, a mouth which curved in a smile which was sympathetic, ironic, and always seeming to suggest that there was just one little thing that he was not telling you.") Intensely shy, with a ferociously logical mind and a precise memory, he would spend hours roaming through his father's enormous library, reading dusty first editions of children's books. And by the time he was eleven he had fallen under the spell of Sherlock Holmes.

Holmes was not the first great literary detective—that honor belongs to Edgar Allan Poe's Inspector Auguste Dupin—but Conan Doyle's hero was the most vivid exemplar of the fledgling genre, which Poe dubbed "tales of ratiocination." Holmes is a cold, calculating machine, a man who is, as one critic put it, "a tracker, a hunter-down, a combination of bloodhound, pointer, and bull-dog." The gaunt Holmes has no wife or children; as he explains, "I am a brain, Watson. The rest of me is a mere appendix." Rigidly scientific, he offers no spiritual bromides to his bereaved clients. Conan Doyle reveals virtually nothing about his character's interior life; he is defined solely by his method. In short, he is the perfect detective, the superhero of the Victorian era, out of which he blasted with his deerstalker hat and Inverness cape.

Richard read the stories straight through, then read them again. His rigorous mind had found its match in Holmes and his "science of deduction," which could wrest an astonishing solution from a single, seemingly unremarkable clue. "All life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a single link of it," Holmes explains in the first story, "A Study in Scarlet," which establishes a narrative formula that subsequent tales nearly always follow. A new client arrives at Holmes's Baker Street consulting room. The detective stuns the visitor by deducing some element of his life by the mere observation of his demeanor or dress. (In "A Case of Identity," he divines that his client is a shortsighted typist by no more than the worn "plush upon her sleeves" and "the dint of a pince-nez at either side of her nose.") After the client presents the inexplicable facts of the case, "the game is afoot," as Holmes likes to say. Amassing clues that invariably boggle Watson, the stories' more earthbound narrator, Holmes ultimately arrives at a dazzling conclusion—one that, to him and him only, seems "elementary." In "The Red-Headed League," Holmes reveals to Watson how he surmised that an assistant pawnbroker was trying to rob a bank by tunnelling underneath it. "I thought of the assistant's fondness for photography, and his trick of vanishing into the cellar," Holmes says, explaining that he then went to see the assistant. "I hardly looked at his face. His knees were what I wished to see. You must yourself have remarked how worn, wrinkled and stained they were. They spoke of those hours of burrowing. The only remaining point was what they were burrowing for. I walked round the corner, saw the City and Suburban Bank abutted on our friend's premises, and felt that I had solved my problem."

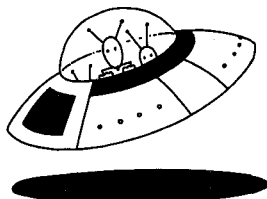
Following the advice that Holmes often gave to Watson, Green practiced how to "see" what others merely "observed." He memorized Holmes's rules, as if they were catechism: "It is a capital

mistake to theorize before one has data"; "never trust to general impressions, my boy, but concentrate yourself upon details"; "there is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

Not long after Green turned thirteen, he carried an assortment of artifacts from local junk sales into the dimly lit attic of Poulton Hall. Part of the attic was known as the Martyr's Chamber and was believed to be haunted, having once "been tenanted by a lady, who was imprisoned there and persecuted to death for her religion," according to Hawthorne. Nevertheless, up in the attic, Green assembled his objects to create a strange tableau. There was a rack of pipes and a Persian slipper stuffed with tobacco. There was a stack of unpaid bills, which he stabbed into a mantle with a knife, so that they were pinned in place. There was a box of pills labelled "Poison"; empty ammunition cartridges and trompe-l'œil bullet marks painted on the walls ("I didn't think the attic would stand up to real bullets," he later remarked); a preserved snake; a brass microscope; and an invitation to the Gasfitters' Ball. Finally, outside the door of the room, Green hung a sign: "Baker Street."

Relying on the stray details sprinkled throughout Conan Doyle's stories, Green had pieced together a replica of Holmes and Watson's apartment—one so precise that it occasionally drew Holmes aficionados from other parts of England. One local reporter described the uncanny sensation of climbing the seventeen stairs—the same number specified in the stories—as a tape recording played in the background with the sounds of Victorian London: the rumble of cab wheels, the clapping of horses' hooves on cobblestones. By then, Green had become the youngest person ever inducted into the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, where members sometimes dressed in period costumes—in high-waisted trousers and top hats.

Though Holmes had first appeared in print nearly a century earlier, he had spawned a literary cult unlike that of any other fictional character. Almost from his inception, readers latched onto him with a zeal that bordered on "the mystical," as one Conan Doyle biographer has noted. When Holmes made his debut, in the 1887 *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, a magazine of somewhat lurid fiction, he



IN THOSE DAYS

Music, food, sex, and their accompanying
tropes like a wall of light at a door
once spattered by laughter

come round to how *you* like it—
was it really you that approved?
And if so what does the loneliness
in all this mean? How blind are we?

We see a few feet into our future
of shrouded lots and ditches.
Surely that way was the long one
to have come. Yet nobody

sees anything wrong with what we're doing,
how we came to discuss it, here, with the wind
and the sun sometimes slanting.
You have arrived at this step, and the way down

is paralyzing, though this is the lost
youth I remember as being O.K., once.
Got to shuffle, even if it's only the sarcasm
of speech that gets lost, while the blessed
sense of it bleeds through,

open to all kinds of interpretations.

—John Ashbery

was considered not just a character but a paragon of the Victorian faith in all things scientific. He entered public consciousness around the same time as the development of the modern police force, at a moment when medicine was finally threatening to eradicate common diseases and industrialization offered to curtail mass poverty. He was the proof that, indeed, the forces of reason could triumph over the forces of madness.

By the time Green was born, however, the worship of scientific thinking had been shattered by other faiths, by Nazism and Communism and Fascism, which had often harnessed the power of technology to demonic ends. Yet, paradoxically, the more illogical the world seemed, the more intense the cult surrounding Holmes became. This symbol of a new creed had become a figure of nostalgia—a person in “a fairy tale,” as Green once put it. The character’s popularity even surpassed the level of fame he had attained in Conan Doyle’s

day, as the stories were reenacted in some two hundred and sixty movies, twenty-five television shows, a musical, a ballet, a burlesque, and six hundred radio plays. Holmes inspired the creation of journals, memorabilia shops, walking tours, postage stamps, hotels, themed ocean cruises.

Edgar W. Smith, a former vice-president of General Motors and the first editor of the *Baker Street Journal*, which publishes scholarship on Conan Doyle’s stories, wrote in a 1946 essay, “What Is It That We Love in Sherlock Holmes?”:

We see him as the fine expression of our urge to trample evil and to set aright the wrongs with which the world is plagued. He is Galahad and Socrates, bringing high adventure to our dull existences and calm, judicial logic to our biased minds. He is the success of all our failures; the bold escape from our imprisonment.

What has made this literary escape unlike any other, though, is that so many people conceive of Holmes as a real person. T. S. Eliot once observed, “Perhaps

the greatest of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries is this: that when we talk of him we invariably fall into the fancy of his existence.” Green himself wrote, “Sherlock Holmes is a real character . . . who lives beyond life’s span and who is constantly rejuvenated.”

At the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, Green was introduced to “the great game,” which Sherlockians had played for decades. It was built around the conceit that the stories’ true author was not Conan Doyle but Watson, who had faithfully recounted Holmes’s exploits. Once, at a gathering of the elite Baker Street Irregulars (which Green also joined), a guest referred to Conan Doyle as the creator of Holmes, prompting one outraged member to exclaim, “Holmes is a man! Holmes is a great man!” If Green had to invoke Conan Doyle’s name, he was told, he should refer to him as merely Watson’s “literary agent.” The challenge of the game was that Conan Doyle had often written the four Holmes novels and fifty-six short stories—“the Sacred Writings,” as Sherlockians called them—in haste, and they were plagued with inconsistencies that made them difficult to pass off as non-fiction. How, for instance, is it possible that in one story Watson is described as having been wounded in Afghanistan in the shoulder by a Jezail bullet, though in another story he complains that the wound was in his leg? The goal was thus to resolve these paradoxes, using the same airtight logic that Holmes exhibits. Similar textual inquiries had already given birth to a related field, known as Sherlockiana—mock scholarship in which fans tried to deduce everything from how many wives Watson has (one to five) to which university Holmes attended (surely Cambridge or Oxford). As Green once conceded, quoting the founder of the Baker Street Irregulars, “Never had so much been written by so many for so few.”

After Green graduated from Oxford, in 1975, he turned his attention to more serious scholarship. Of all the puzzles surrounding the Sacred Writings, the greatest one, Green realized, centered on the man whom the stories had long since eclipsed—Conan Doyle himself. Green set out to compile the first comprehensive bibliography, hunting down every piece of material that Conan Doyle



"Now I have to start pretending I like graphic novels, too?"

wrote: pamphlets, plays, poems, obituaries, songs, unpublished manuscripts, letters to the editor. Carrying a plastic bag in place of a briefcase, Green unearthed documents that had long been hidden behind the veil of history.

In the midst of this research, Green discovered that John Gibson was working on a similar project, and they agreed to collaborate. The resulting tome, published in 1983 by Oxford University Press, with a foreword by Graham Greene, is seven hundred and twelve pages long and contains notations on nearly every scrap of writing that Conan Doyle ever produced, down to the kind of paper in which a manuscript was bound ("cloth," "light blue diaper-grain"). When the bibliography was done, Gibson continued in his job as a government property assessor. Green, however, had inherited a sizable sum of money from his family, who had sold part of their estate, and he used the bibliography as a launching pad for a biography of Conan Doyle.

Writing a biography is akin to the process of detection, and Green started to retrace every step of Conan Doyle's life, as if it were an elaborate crime scene. During the nineteen-eighties, Green followed Conan Doyle's movements from the moment he was born, on May 22, 1859, in a squalid part of Edinburgh. Green visited the neighborhood where

Conan Doyle was raised, by a devout Christian mother and a dreamy father. (He drew one of the first illustrations of Sherlock Holmes—a sketch of the detective discovering a corpse, which accompanied a paperback edition of "A Study in Scarlet.") Green also amassed an intricate paper record that showed his subject's intellectual evolution. He discovered, for instance, that after Conan Doyle studied medicine, at the University of Edinburgh, and fell under the influence of rationalist thinkers like Oliver Wendell Holmes—who undoubtedly inspired the surname of Conan Doyle's detective—he renounced Catholicism, vowing, "Never will I accept anything which cannot be proved to me."

In the early eighties, Green published the first of a series of introductions to Penguin Classics editions of Conan Doyle's previously uncollected works—many of which he had helped to uncover. The essays, written in a clinical style, began garnering him attention outside the insular subculture of Sherlockians. One essay, running more than a hundred pages, was a small biography of Conan Doyle unto itself; in another, Green cast further light on the short story "The Case of the Man Who Was Wanted," which had been found in a chest more than a decade after Conan Doyle's death and was claimed by his

widow and sons to be the last unpublished Holmes story. Some experts had wondered if the story was a fake and even if Conan Doyle's two sons, in search of money to sustain their lavish life styles, had forged it. Yet Green conclusively showed that the story was neither by Conan Doyle nor a forgery; instead, it was written by an architect named Arthur Whitaker, who had sent it to Conan Doyle in hopes of collaborating. Scholars described Green's essays variously as "dazzling," "unparalleled," and—the ultimate compliment—"Holmesian."

Still, Green was determined to dig deeper for his now highly anticipated biography. As the mystery writer Iain Pears has observed, Conan Doyle's hero acts in nearly the same fashion as a Freudian analyst, piecing together his clients' hidden narratives, which he alone can perceive. In a 1987 review of Conan Doyle's autobiography, "Memories and Adventures," which was published in 1924, Green noted, "It is as if Conan Doyle—whose character suggested kindness and trust—had a fear of intimacy. When he describes his life, he omits the inner man."

To reveal this "inner man," Green examined facts that Conan Doyle rarely, if ever, spoke of himself—most notably, that his father, an epileptic and an incorrigible alcoholic, was eventually confined to an insane asylum. Yet the more Green tried to plumb his subject, the more he became aware of the holes in his knowledge of Conan Doyle. He didn't want just to sketch Conan Doyle's story with a series of anecdotes; he wanted to know everything about him. In the draft of an early mystery story, "The Surgeon of Gaster Fall," Conan Doyle writes of a son who has locked his raving father inside a cage—but this incident was excised from the published version. Had Conan Doyle been the one to commit his father to the asylum? Was Holmes's mania for logic a reaction to his father's genuine mania? And what did Conan Doyle mean when he wrote, in his deeply personal poem "The Inner Room," that he "has thoughts he dare not say"?

Green wanted to create an immaculate biography, one in which each fact led inexorably to the next. He wanted to be both Watson and Holmes to Conan Doyle, to be his narrator and his detective. Yet he knew the words of Holmes: "Data!

Data! Data! I can't make bricks without clay." And the only way to succeed, he realized, was to track down the lost archive.

"Murder," Owen Dudley Edwards, a highly regarded Conan Doyle scholar, said. "I fear that is what the preponderance of the evidence points to."

I had called him in Scotland, after Gibson informed me that Edwards was pursuing an informal investigation into Green's death. Edwards had worked with Green to stop the auction, which took place, in spite of the uproar, almost two months after Green's body was found. Edwards said of his friend, "I think he knew too much about the archive."

A few days later, I flew to Edinburgh, where Edwards promised to share with me his findings. We had arranged to meet at a hotel on the edge of the old city. It was on a hill studded with medieval castles and covered in a thin mist, not far from where Conan Doyle had studied medicine under Dr. Joseph Bell, one of the models for Sherlock Holmes. (Once, during a class, Bell held up a glass vial. "This, gentlemen, contains a most potent drug," he said. "It is *extremely* bitter to the taste." To the class's astonishment, he touched the amber liquid, lifted a finger to his mouth, and licked it. He then declared, "Not one of you has developed his power of perception . . . while I placed my *index* finger in the awful brew, it was my *middle* finger—aye—which somehow found its way into my mouth.")

Edwards greeted me in the hotel lobby. He is a short, pear-shaped man with wild gray sideburns and an even wilder gray beard. A history professor at the University of Edinburgh, he wore a rumpled tweed coat over a V-neck sweater, and carried a knapsack on his shoulder.

We sat down at the restaurant, and I waited as he rummaged through the books in his bag. Edwards, who has written numerous books, including "The Quest for Sherlock Holmes," an acclaimed account of Conan Doyle's early life, began pulling out copies of Green's edited collections. Green, he said, was "the world's greatest Conan Doyle expert. I have the authority to say it. Richard ultimately became the greatest of us all. That is a firm and definite statement of someone who knows."

As he spoke, he tended to pull his

chin in toward his chest, so that his beard fanned out. He told me that he had met Green in 1981, while researching his book on Conan Doyle. At the time, Green was still working on his bibliography with Gibson; even so, he had shared all his data with Edwards. "That was the kind of scholar he was," he said.

To Edwards, Green's death was even more baffling than the crimes in a Holmes story. He picked up one of the Conan Doyle collections and read aloud from "A Case of Identity," in the cool, ironical voice of Holmes:

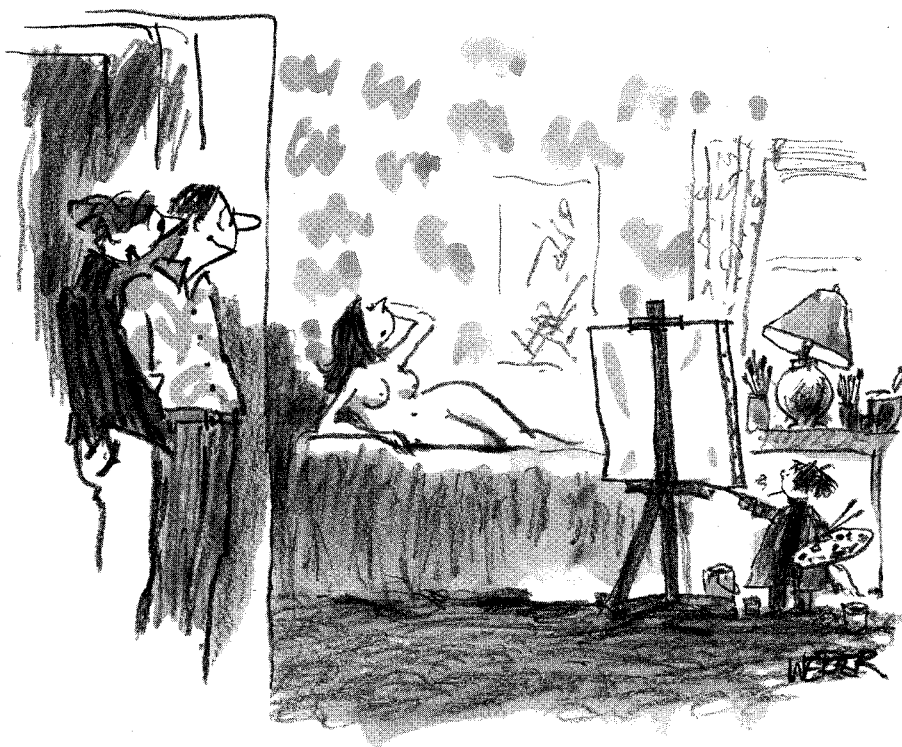
Life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent. We would not dare to conceive the things which are really mere commonplaces of existence. If we could fly out of that window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on, the strange coincidences, the plannings, the cross-purposes, the wonderful chains of events, working through generations, and leading to the most *outré* results, it would make all fiction with its conventionalities and foreseen conclusion most stale and unprofitable.

After Edwards closed the book, he explained that he had spoken frequently with Green about the Christie's sale. "Our lives have been dominated by the fact that Conan Doyle had five children, three of whom became his liter-

ary heirs," Edwards said. "The two boys were playboys. One of them, Denis, was, I gather, utterly selfish. The other one, Adrian, was a repulsive crook. And then there was an absolutely wonderful daughter."

Green, he said, had become so close to the daughter, Dame Jean, that he came to be known as the son she never had, even though in the past Conan Doyle's children had typically had fractious relationships with their father's biographers. In the early nineteen-forties, for example, Adrian and Denis had coöperated with Hesketh Pearson on "Conan Doyle: His Life and Art," but when the book came out and portrayed Conan Doyle as "the man in the street," a phrase Conan Doyle himself had used, Adrian rushed into print his own biography, "The True Conan Doyle," and Denis allegedly challenged Pearson to a duel. Dame Jean had subsequently taken it upon herself to guard her father's legacy against scholars who might present him in too stark a light. Yet she confided in Green, who had tried to balance his veneration of his subject with a commitment to the truth.

Edwards said that Dame Jean not only gave Green a glimpse of the treasured archive; she also asked for his help in transferring various papers to her solicitor's office. "Richard told me that he



"Billy is turning out to be quite the little artist."

had physically moved them," Edwards said. "So his knowledge was really quite dangerous."

He claimed that Green was "the biggest figure standing in the way" of the Christie's auction, since he had seen some of the papers and could testify that Dame Jean had intended to donate them to the British Library. Soon after the sale was announced, Edwards said, he and Green had learned that Charles Foley, Sir Arthur's great-nephew, and two of Foley's cousins were behind the sale. But neither he nor Green could understand how these distant heirs had legally obtained control of the archive. "All we were clear about was that there was a scam and that, clearly, someone was robbing stuff that should go to the British Library," Edwards said. He added, "This was *not* a hypothesis—it was quite certain in our own minds."

Edwards also had little doubt that somebody had murdered his friend. He noted the circumstantial details—Green's mention of threats to his life, his reference to the American who was "trying to bring him down." Some observers, he said, had speculated that Green's death might have been the result of autoerotic asphyxiation, but he told me that there were no signs that Green was engaged in sexual activity at the time. He added that garroting is typically a brutal method of execution—"a method of murder which a skilled professional would use." What's more, Green had no known history of depression. Edwards pointed out that Green, on the day before he died, had made plans with another friend for a holiday in Italy the following week. Moreover, he said, if Green had killed himself, there surely would have been a suicide note; it was inconceivable that a man who kept notes on everything would not have left one.

"There are other things," Edwards continued. "He was garroted with a bootlace, yet he always wore slip-on shoes." And Edwards found meaning in seemingly insignificant details, the kind that Holmes might note—particularly, the partially empty bottle of gin by his bed. To Edwards, this was a clear sign of the presence of a stranger, since Green, an oenophile, had drunk wine at supper that evening, and would never have followed wine with gin.

"Whoever did this is still at large,"

Edwards said. He put a hand on my shoulder. "Please be careful. I don't want to see you garroted, like poor Richard." Before we parted, he told me one more thing—he knew who the American was.

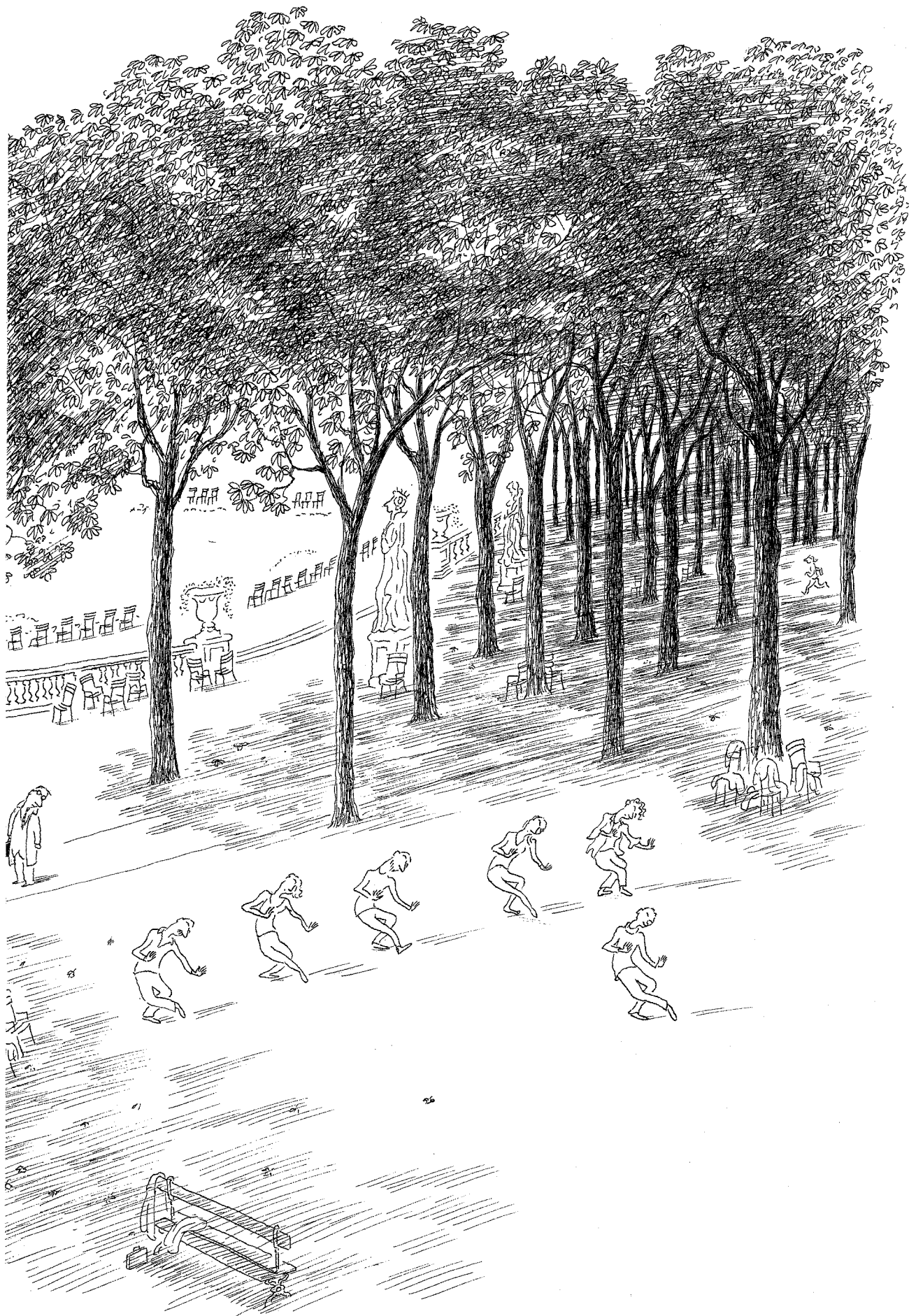
The American, who asked that I not use his name, lives in Washington, D.C. After I tracked him down, he agreed to meet me at Timberlake's pub near Dupont Circle. I found him sitting at the bar, sipping red wine. Though he was slumped over, he looked strikingly tall, with a hawkish nose and a thinning ring of gray hair. He appeared to be in his fifties and wore bluejeans and a button-down white shirt, with a fountain pen sticking out of the front pocket, like a professor.

After pausing a moment to deduce who I was, he stood and led me to a table in the back of the room, which was filled with smoke and sounds from a jukebox. We ordered dinner, and he proceeded to tell me what Edwards had loosely sketched out: that he was a longtime member of the Baker Street Irregulars and had, for many years, helped to represent Conan Doyle's literary estate in America. It is his main job, though, that has given him a slightly menacing air—at least in the minds of Green's friends. He works for the Pentagon in a high-ranking post that deals with clandestine operations. ("One of Donald Rumsfeld's pals," as Edwards described him.)

The American said that after he received a Ph.D. in international relations, in 1970, and became an expert in the Cold War and nuclear doctrine, he was drawn into the Sherlockian games and their pursuit of immaculate logic. "I've always kept the two worlds separate," he told me at one point. "I don't think a lot of people at the Pentagon would understand my fascination with a literary character." He met Green through the Sherlockian community, he said. As members of the Baker Street Irregulars, both had been given official titles from the Holmes stories. The American was "Rodger Prescott of evil memory," after the American counterfeiter in "The Adventure of the Three Garridebs." Green was known as "The Three Gables," after the villa in "The Adventure of the Three Gables," which is ransacked by burglars in search of a scandalous biographical manuscript.

In the mid-nineteen-eighties, the





American said, he and Green had collaborated on several projects. As the editor of a collection of essays on Conan Doyle, he had asked Green, whom he considered then “the single most knowledgeable living person on Conan Doyle,” to write the crucial chapter on the author’s 1924 memoir. “My relationship with Richard was always productive,” he recalled. Then, in the early nineteen-nineties, he said, they had had a falling out—a result, he added, of a startling rupture in Green’s relationship with Dame Jean.

“Richard had gotten very close to Dame Jean, and was getting all sorts of family photographs, having represented himself as a great admirer of Conan Doyle,” he said. “And then she saw something in print by him and suddenly realized that he had been representing his views very differently, and that was kind of the end of it.”

The American insisted that he couldn’t remember what Green had written that upset her. But Edwards, and others in Holmesian circles, said that the reason nobody could recall a specific offense was that Green’s essays had never been particularly inflammatory. According to R. Dixon Smith, a friend of Green’s and a longtime Conan Doyle book dealer, the American played on Dame Jean’s sensitivities about her father’s reputation and

seized upon some of Green’s candid words, which had never upset her before, then “twisted” them like “a screw.” Edwards said of the American, “I think he did everything he possibly could to injure Richard. He drove a wedge between Richard and Dame Jean Conan Doyle.” After Dame Jean cast Green out, Edwards and others noted, the American grew closer to her. Edwards told me that Green never got over the quarrel with Dame Jean. “He used to look at me like his heart was breaking,” he said.

When I pressed the American further about the incident, he said simply, “Because I was Jean’s representative, I got caught in the middle of it.” Soon after, he said, “the good feeling and cooperation by Green toward me ended.” At Sherlockian events, he said, they continued to see each other, but Green, always reserved, would often avoid him.

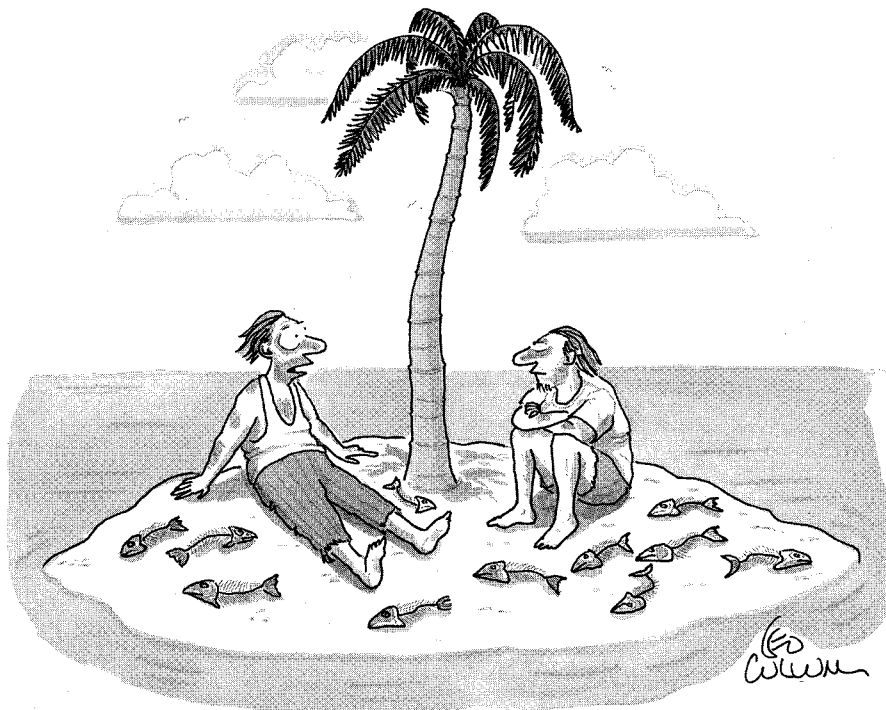
Smith had told me that in Green’s final months he often seemed “preoccupied” with the American. “He kept wondering, What’s he gonna do next?” During the last week of his life, Green told several friends that the American was working to defeat his crusade against the auction, and he expressed fear that his rival might try to damage his scholarly reputation. On March 24th, two days before he died, Green learned that the American was in London and was plan-

ning to attend a meeting that evening of the Sherlock Holmes Society. A friend said that Green called him and exclaimed, “I don’t want to see him! I don’t want to go.” Green backed out of the meeting at the last minute. The friend said of the American, “I think he scared Richard.”

As I mentioned some of the allegations of Green’s friends, the American unfolded his napkin and touched the corners of his mouth. He explained that during his visit to London he had offered counsel to Charles Foley—whom he now served as a literary representative, as he had for Dame Jean—and discussed the sale of the archive at Christie’s. But the American emphasized that he had not seen or spoken to Green for more than a year. On the night that Green died, he revealed with some embarrassment, he was walking through London with his wife on a group tour of Jack the Ripper’s crime scenes. He said that he had learned only recently that Green had become fixated on him before his death, and he noted that some Sherlockians blurred the line between fandom and fanaticism. “It was because of the way people felt about the character,” he said. Holmes was a sort of “vampire-like creature,” he said; he consumed some people.

The waiter had served our meals, and the American paused to take a bite of steak and onion rings. He then explained that Conan Doyle had felt oppressed by his creation. Though the stories had made him the highest-paid author of his day, Conan Doyle wearied of constantly “inventing problems and building up chains of inductive reason,” as he once said bitterly. In the stories, Holmes himself seems overwhelmed by his task, going days without sleep, and, after solving a case, often shooting up cocaine (“a seven-percent solution”) in order to spell the subsequent drain and boredom. But, for Conan Doyle, there seemed to be no similar release, and he confided to one friend that “Holmes is becoming such a burden to me that it makes my life unendurable.”

The very qualities that had made Holmes invincible—“his character admits of no light or shade,” as Conan Doyle put it—eventually made him intolerable. Moreover, Conan Doyle feared that the detective stories eclipsed what he called his “more serious literary work.”



“If you could eat only one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?”

He had spent years researching several historical novels, which, he was convinced, would earn him a place in the pantheon of writers. In 1891, after he finished "The White Company," which was set in the Middle Ages and based on tales of "gallant, pious knights," he proclaimed, "Well, I'll never beat that." The book was popular in its day, but it was soon obscured by the shadow of Holmes, as were his other novels, with their comparatively stilted, lifeless prose. After Conan Doyle completed the domestic novel "A Duet with an Occasional Chorus," in 1899, Andrew Lang, a well-known editor who had helped publish one of his previous books, summed up the sentiment of most readers: "It may be a vulgar taste, but we decidedly prefer the adventures of Dr. Watson with Sherlock Holmes."

Conan Doyle was increasingly dismayed by the great paradox of his success: the more real Holmes became in the minds of readers, the less the author seemed to exist. Finally, Conan Doyle felt that he had no choice. As the American put it, "He had to kill Sherlock Holmes." Conan Doyle knew that the death had to be spectacular. "A man like that mustn't die of a pin-prick or influenza," he told a close friend. "His end must be violent and intensely dramatic." For months, he tried to imagine the perfect murder. Then, in December, 1893, six years after he gave birth to Holmes, Conan Doyle published "The Final Problem." The story breaks from the established formula: there is no puzzle to be solved, no dazzling display of deductive genius. And this time Holmes is the one pursued. He is being chased by Professor Moriarty, "the Napoleon of crime," who is "the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city" of London. Moriarty is the first true counterpart to Holmes, a mathematician who is, as Holmes informs Watson, "a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker." Tall and ascetic-looking, he even physically resembles Holmes.

What is most striking about the story, though, is that the two great logicians have descended into illogic—they are paranoid, and consumed only with each other. At one point, Moriarty tells Holmes, "This is not danger. . . . It is inevitable destruction." Finally, the two converge on a cliff overlooking Reich-

enbach Falls, in Switzerland. As Watson later deduces from evidence at the scene, Holmes and Moriarty struggled by the edge of the precipice before plunging to their deaths. After finishing the story, Conan Doyle wrote in his diary, with apparent delight, "Killed Holmes."

As the American spoke of these details, he seemed stunned that Conan Doyle had gone through with such an extraordinary act. Still, he pointed out, Conan Doyle could not escape from his creation. In England, men reportedly wore black armbands in mourning. In America, clubs devoted to the cause "Let's Keep Holmes Alive" were formed. Though Conan Doyle insisted that Holmes's death was "justifiable homicide," readers denounced him as a brute and demanded that he resuscitate their hero; after all, no one had actually seen him go off the cliff. As Green wrote in a 1983 essay, "If ever a murderer was to be haunted by the man he had killed and to be forced to atone for his act, it was the creator, turned destroyer, of Sherlock Holmes." In 1901, under increasing pressure, Conan Doyle released "The Hound of the Baskervilles," about an ancient family curse, but the events in the story antedated Holmes's death. Then, two years later, Conan Doyle succumbed completely, and began writing new Holmes stories, explaining, less than convincingly, in "The Adventure of the Empty House," that Holmes had never plunged to his death but merely arranged it to look that way so he could escape from Moriarty's gang.

The American told me that even after Conan Doyle died Holmes continued to loom over his descendants. "Dame Jean thought that Sherlock Holmes was the family curse," he said. Like her father, he said, she had tried to draw attention to his other works but was constantly forced to tend to the detective's thousands of fans—many of whom sent letters addressed to Holmes, requesting his help in solving real crimes. In a 1935 essay entitled "Sherlock Holmes the God," G. K. Chesterton observed of Sherlockians, "It is getting beyond a joke. The hobby is hardening into a delusion."

Several actors who played Holmes were also haunted by him, the American said. In a 1956 autobiography, "In and

Out of Character," Basil Rathbone, who played the detective in more than a dozen films, complained that because of his portrayal of Holmes his renown for other parts, including Oscar-nominated ones, was "sinking into oblivion." The public conflated him with his most famous character, which the studio and audience demanded he play again and again, until by the end he, too, lamented that he "could

not kill Mr. Holmes." Another actor, Jeremy Brett, had a breakdown while playing the detective and was eventually admitted to a psychiatric ward, where he was said to have cried out, "Damn you, Holmes!"

At one point, the American showed me a thick book, which he had brought to the pub. It was part of a multivolume history that he was writing on the Baker Street Irregulars and Sherlockian scholarship. He had started the project in 1988. "I thought if I searched pretty assiduously I'd find enough material to do a single hundred-and-fifty-page volume," he said. "I've now done five volumes for more than fifteen hundred pages, and I've only gotten up to 1950." He added, "It's been a slippery slope into madness and obsession."

As he spoke of his fascination with Holmes, he recalled one of the last times he had seen Green, three years earlier, at a symposium at the University of Minnesota. Green had given a lecture on "The Hound of the Baskervilles." "It was a multimedia presentation about the origins of the novel, and it was just dazzling," the American said. He repeated the word "dazzling" several times ("It's the only word to describe it"), and as he sat up in his chair and his eyes brightened I realized that I was talking not to Green's Moriarty but to his soul mate. Then, catching himself, he reminded me that he had a full-time job and a family. "The danger is if you have nothing else in your life but Sherlock Holmes," he said.

In 1988, Richard Green made a pilgrimage to Reichenbach Falls to see where his childhood hero had nearly met his demise. Conan Doyle himself had visited the site in 1893, and Green wanted to repeat the author's journey. Standing at the edge of the falls, Green stared at the chasm below, where, as Watson noted after he called out, "My



only answer was my own voice reverberating in a rolling echo from the cliffs around me."

By the mid-nineteen-nineties, Green knew that he would not have access to the Conan Doyle archive until Dame Jean died—presuming that she bequeathed the papers to the British Library. In the meantime, he continued researching his biography, which, he concluded, would require no less than three volumes: the first would cover Conan Doyle's childhood; the second, the arc of his literary career; the third, his descent into a kind of madness.

Relying on public documents, Green outlined this last stage, which began after Conan Doyle started using his powers of observation to solve real-world mysteries. In 1906, Conan Doyle took up the case of George Edalji, a half-Parsi Indian living near Birmingham, who faced seven years of hard labor for allegedly mutilating his neighbors' cattle during the night. Conan Doyle suspected that Edalji had been tagged as a criminal merely because of his ethnicity, and he assumed the role of detective. Upon meeting his client, he noticed that the young man was holding a newspaper inches from his face.

"Aren't you astigmatic?" Conan Doyle asked.

"Yes," Edalji admitted.

Conan Doyle called in an ophthalmologist, who confirmed that Edalji's malady was so severe that he was unable to see properly even with glasses. Conan Doyle then trekked to the scene of the crime, traversing a maze of railroad tracks and hedges. "I, a strong and active man, in broad daylight, found it a hard matter to pass," he later wrote. Indeed, he contended, it would have been impossible for a nearly blind person to make the journey and then slaughter an animal in the pitch black of night. A tribunal soon concurred, and the *New York Times* declared, "CONAN DOYLE SOLVES A NEW DREYFUS CASE."

Conan Doyle even helped in solving a case of a serial killer, after he spotted newspaper accounts in which two women had died in the same bizarre manner: the victims were recent brides, who had "accidentally" drowned in their bathtubs. Conan Doyle informed Scotland Yard of his theory, telling the inspector, in an echo of Holmes, "No time is to be lost";

the killer, dubbed "the Bluebeard of the Bath," was subsequently caught and convicted in a sensational trial.

Around 1914, Conan Doyle tried to apply his rational powers to the most important matter of his day—the logic of launching the First World War. He was convinced that the war was not simply about entangling alliances and a dead archduke; it was a sensible way to restore the codes of honor and moral purpose that he had celebrated in his historical novels. That year, he unleashed a spate of propaganda, declaring, "Fear not, for our sword will not be broken, nor shall it ever drop from our hands." In the Holmes story "His Last Bow," which is set in 1914, the detective tells Watson that after the "storm has cleared" a "cleaner, better, stronger land will lie in the sunshine."

Though Conan Doyle was too old to fight, many of his relatives heeded his call "to arms," including his son Kingsley. The glorious battle Conan Doyle envisioned, however, became a cataclysm. The products of scientific reason—machines and engineering and electronics—were transformed into agents of destruction. Conan Doyle visited the battlefield by the Somme, where tens of thousands of British soldiers died, and where he later reported seeing a soldier "drenched crimson from head to foot, with two great glazed eyes looking upwards through a mask of blood." In 1918, a chastened Conan Doyle realized that the conflict was "evidently preventable." By that time, ten million people had perished, including Kingsley, who died from battle wounds and influenza.

After the war, Conan Doyle wrote a handful of Holmes stories, yet the field of detective fiction was changing. The all-knowing detective gradually gave way to the hardboiled dick, who acted more on instinct and gin than on reason. In "The Simple Art of Murder," Raymond Chandler, while admiring Conan Doyle, dismissed the tradition of the "grim logician" and his "exhausting concatenation of insignificant clues,"

which now seemed like an absurdity.

Meanwhile, in his own life, Conan Doyle seemed to abandon reason altogether. As one of Green's colleagues in the Baker Street Irregulars, Daniel Stashower, relates in a 1999 book, "Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle," the creator of Holmes began to believe in ghosts. He attended séances and received messages from the dead through "the power of automatic writing," a method akin to that of the Ouija board. During one session, Conan Doyle, who had once considered the belief in life after death as "a delusion," claimed that his dead younger brother said, "It is so grand to be in touch like this."

One day, Conan Doyle heard a voice in the séance room. As he later described the scene in a letter to a friend:

I said, "Is that you, boy?"

He said in a very intense whisper and a tone all his own, "Father!" and then after a pause, "Forgive me!"

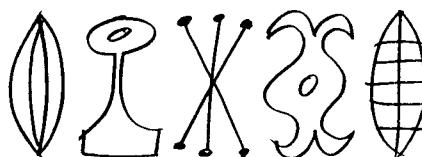
I said, "There was never anything to forgive. You were the best son a man ever had." A strong hand descended on my head which was slowly pressed forward, and I felt a kiss just above my brow.

"Are you happy?" I cried.

There was a pause and then very gently, "I am so happy."

The creator of Sherlock Holmes had become the St. Paul of psychics. Conan Doyle claimed to see not only dead family members but fairies as well. He championed photographs taken in 1917 by two girls that purported to show such phantasmal creatures, even though, as one of the girls later admitted, "I could see the hatpins holding up the figures. I've always marvelled that anybody ever took it seriously." Conan Doyle, however, was convinced, and even published a book called "The Coming of Fairies." He opened the Psychic Bookshop, in London, and told friends that he had received messages that the world was coming to an end. "I suppose I am Sherlock Holmes, if anybody is, and I say that the case for spiritualism is absolutely proved," he declared. In 1918, a headline in the *Sunday Express* asked, "IS CONAN DOYLE MAD?"

For the first time, Green struggled to rationalize his subject's life. In one essay, Green wrote, "It is hard to understand how a man who had stood for sound common sense and healthy attitudes could sit in darkened rooms watching for ectoplasm." Green reacted at times as if



his hero had betrayed him. In one passage, he wrote angrily, "Conan Doyle was deluding himself."

"One thing Richard couldn't stand was Conan Doyle's being involved with spiritualism," Edwards said. "He thought it crazy." His friend Dixon Smith told me, "It was all Conan Doyle. He pursued him with all his mind and body." Green's house became filled with more and more objects from Conan Doyle's life: long-forgotten propaganda leaflets and speeches on spiritualism; an arcane study of the Boer War; previously unknown essays on photography. "I remember once, I discovered a copy of 'A Duet with an Occasional Chorus,'" Gibson said. "It had a great red cover on it. I showed it to Richard and he got really excited. He said, 'God, this must have been the salesman's copy.'" When Green found one of the few surviving copies of the 1887 *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, with "A Study in Scarlet," which was worth as much as a hundred and thirty thousand dollars, he sent a card to a friend with two words on it: "At last!"

Green also wanted to hold things that Conan Doyle himself had held: letter openers and pens and spectacles. "He would collect all day and all night, and I mean night," his brother, Scirard, told me. Green covered many of his walls with Conan Doyle's family photographs. He even had a piece of wallpaper from one of Conan Doyle's homes. "'Obsession' is by no means too strong a word to describe what Richard had," his friend Nicholas Utechin, the editor of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, said.

"It's self-perpetuating and I don't know how to stop," Green confessed to an antiques magazine in 1999.

By 2000, his house resembled the attic at Poulton Hall, only now he seemed to be living in a museum dedicated to Conan Doyle rather than to Holmes. "I have around forty thousand books," Green told the magazine. "Then, of course, there are the photographs, the pictures, the papers, and all the other ephemera. I know it sounds a lot, but, you see, the more you have, the more you feel you need."

And what he longed for most remained out of reach: the archive. After Dame Jean died, in 1997, and no papers materialized at the British Library, he



"Roger might be just right for you. He plans his entire day around the wild thing, too."

became increasingly frustrated. Where he had once judiciously built his conjectures about Conan Doyle's life, he now seemed reckless. In 2002, to the shock of Doyleans around the world, Green wrote a paper claiming that he had proof that Conan Doyle had had a tryst with Jean Leckie, his delicately beautiful second wife, before his first wife, Louisa, died of tuberculosis, in 1906. Though it was well known that Conan Doyle had formed a bond with Leckie during his wife's long illness, he had always insisted, "I fight the devil and I win." And, to maintain an air of Victorian rectitude, he often brought along chaperones when he and Leckie were together. Green based his allegation on the 1901 census, which reported that on the day the survey was taken Conan Doyle was staying at the Ashdown Forest Hotel, in East Sussex. So, too, was Leckie. "Conan Doyle could not have chosen a worse weekend on which to have a private tryst," Green wrote. Yet Green failed

to note one crucial fact also contained in the census report—Conan Doyle's mother was staying in the hotel with him, apparently as a chaperone. Later, Green was forced to recant, in a letter to *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, saying, "I was guilty of the capital mistake of theorising without data."

Still, he continued to lash out at Conan Doyle, as Conan Doyle once had at Sherlock Holmes. Edwards recalled that, in one conversation, Green decried Conan Doyle as "unoriginal" and "a plagiarist." He confessed to another friend, "I've wasted my whole life on a second-rate writer."

"I think he was frustrated because the family wasn't coming to any agreement," Smith said. "The archive wasn't made available, and he got angry not at the heirs but at Conan Doyle."

Last March, when Green hurried to Christie's after the auction of the papers was announced, he discovered that the archive was as rich and as abundant as

he'd imagined. Among the thousands of items were fragments of the first tale that Conan Doyle wrote, at the age of six; illustrated logs from when Conan Doyle was a surgeon on a Scottish whaling ship, in the eighteen-eighties; letters from Conan Doyle's father (whose drawings in the asylum resembled the fairies that his son later seized upon as real); a brown envelope with a cross and the name of his dead son inscribed upon it; the manuscript of Conan Doyle's first novel, which was never published; a missive from Conan Doyle to his brother, which seemed to confirm that Green's hunch had been right, and that Conan Doyle had in fact begun an affair with Leckie. Jane Flower, who helped to organize the papers for Christie's, told reporters, "The whereabouts of this material was previously unknown, and it is for this reason that no modern-day biography of the author exists."

Meanwhile, back at his home, Green tried to piece together why the archive was about to slip into private hands once more. According to Green's family, he typed notes in his computer, reexam-

ining the trail of evidence, which he thought proved that the papers belonged to the British Library. He worked late into the night, frequently going without sleep. None of it, however, seemed to add up. At one point, he typed in bold letters, "STICK TO THE FACTS." After another sleepless night, he told his sister that the world seemed "Kafkaesque."

Several hours before Green died, he called his friend Utechin at home. Green had asked him to find a tape of an old BBC radio interview, which, Green recalled, quoted one of Conan Doyle's heirs saying that the archive should be given to the British Library. Utechin said that he had found the tape, but there was no such statement on the recording. Green became apoplectic, and accused his friend of conspiring against him, as if he were another Moriarty. Finally, Utechin said, "Richard, you've lost it!"

One afternoon while I was at my hotel in London, the phone rang. "I need to see you again," John Gibson said. "I'll take the next train in." Before he hung up, he added, "I have a theory."

I met him in my hotel room. He was carrying several scraps of paper, on which he had taken notes. He sat down by the window, his slender figure silhouetted in the fading light, and announced, "I think it was suicide."

He had sifted through the data, including details that I had shared with him from my own investigation. There was mounting evidence, he said, that his rationalist friend was betraying signs of irrationality in the last week of his life. There was the fact that there was no evidence of forced entry at Green's home. And there was the fact, perhaps most critically, of the wooden spoon by Green's hand.

"He had to have used it to tighten the cord" like a tourniquet, Gibson said. "If someone else had garroted him, why would he need the spoon? The killer could simply use his hands." He continued, "I think things in his life had not turned out the way he wanted. This Christie's sale simply brought everything to a head."

He glanced nervously at his notes, which he strained to see without his magnifying glass. "That's not all," he said. "I think he wanted it to look like murder."

He waited to assess my reaction, then went on, "That's why he didn't leave a note. That's why he took his voice off the answering machine. That's why he sent that message to his sister with the three phone numbers on it. That's why he spoke of the American who was after him. He must have been planning it for days, laying the foundation, giving us false clues."

I knew that, in detective fiction, the reverse scenario generally turns out to be true—a suicide is found to have been murder. As Holmes declares in "The Resident Patient," "This is no suicide. . . . It is a very deeply planned and cold-blooded murder." There is, however, one notable exception. It is, eerily enough, in one of the last Holmes mysteries, "The Problem of Thor Bridge," a story that Green once cited in an essay. A wife is found lying dead on a bridge, shot in the head at point-blank range. All the evidence points to one suspect: the governess, with whom the husband had been flirting. Yet Holmes shows that the wife had not been killed by anyone; rather, enraged by jealousy over her hus-



"To be honest, I'm not sure that accounting can be taught."

band's illicit overtures to the governess, she had killed herself and framed the woman whom she blamed for her misery. Of all Conan Doyle's stories, it digs deepest into the human psyche and its criminal motivations. As the governess tells Holmes, "When I reached the bridge she was waiting for me. Never did I realize till that moment how this poor creature hated me. She was like a mad woman—indeed, I think she was a mad woman, subtly mad with the deep power of deception which insane people may have."

I wondered if Green could have been so enraged with the loss of the archive that he might have done something similar, and even tried to frame the American, whom he blamed for ruining his relationship with Dame Jean and for the sale of the archive. I wondered if he could have tried, in one last desperate attempt, to create order out of the chaos around him. I wondered if this theory, however improbable, was in fact the least "impossible."

I shared with Gibson some other clues I had uncovered: the call that Green had made to the reporter days before his death, saying that "something" might happen to him; a reference in a Holmes story to one of Moriarty's main henchmen as a "garroter by trade"; and a statement to the coroner by Green's sister, who said that the note with the three phone numbers had reminded her of "the beginning of a thriller."

After a while, Gibson looked up at me, his face ghastly white. "Don't you see?" he exclaimed. "He staged the whole thing. He created the perfect mystery."

Before I went back to America, I went to see Green's sister, Priscilla West. She lives near Oxford, in a three-story, eighteenth-century brick house with a walled garden. She had long, wavy brown hair, an attractive round face, and small oval glasses. She invited me inside with a reticent voice, saying, "Are you a drawing-room person or a kitchen person?"

I shrugged uncertainly, and she led me into the drawing room, which had antique furniture and her father's children's books on the shelves. As we sat down, I explained to her that I had been struggling to write her brother's story. The American had told me, "There is no

such thing as a definitive biography," and Green seemed particularly resistant to explanation.

"Richard compartmentalized his life," his sister said. "There are a lot of things we've only found out since he died." At the inquest, his family, and most of his friends, had been startled when Lawrence Keen, who was nearly half Green's age, announced that he had been Richard's lover years ago. "No one in the family knew" that Green was gay, his sister explained. "It wasn't something he ever talked about."

As West recalled other surprising fragments of Green's biography (travels to Tibet, a brief attempt at writing a novel), I tried to picture him as best I could with his glasses, his plastic bag in hand, and his wry smile. West had seen her brother's body lying on the bed, and several times she told me, "I just wish..." before falling silent. She handed me copies of the eulogies that Green's friends had delivered at the memorial service, which was held on May 22nd, the day Conan Doyle was born. On the back of the program from the service were several quotes from Sherlock Holmes stories:

I caught a glimpse of a great heart as well as of a great brain.

He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge.

His career has been an extraordinary one.

After a while, she got up to pour herself a cup of tea. When she sat down again, she said that her brother had willed his collection to a library in Portsmouth, near where Conan Doyle wrote the first two Holmes stories, so that other scholars could have access to it. The collection was so large that it had taken two weeks, and required twelve truckloads, to cart it all away. It was estimated to be worth several million dollars—far more, in all likelihood, than the treasured archive. "He really did not like the idea of scholarship being put second to greed," West said. "He lived and died by this."

She then told me something about the archive which had only recently come to light, and which her brother had never learned: Dame Jean Conan Doyle, while dying of cancer, had made a last-minute deed of apportionment, splitting the archive between herself and the three heirs of her former sister-in-

law, Anna Conan Doyle. What was being auctioned off, therefore, belonged to the three heirs, and not to Dame Jean, and, though some people still questioned the morality of the sale, the British Library had reached the conclusion that it was legal.

Green also could not know that after the auction, on May 19th, the most important papers ended up at the British Library. Dame Jean had not allotted those documents to the other heirs, and had willed many of them to the library; at the same time, the library had purchased much of the remaining material at the auction. As Gibson later told me, "The tragedy is that Richard could have still written his biography. He would have had everything he needed."

Two questions, however, remained unclear. How, I asked West, did an American voice wind up on her brother's answering machine?

"I'm afraid it's not that complicated," she said. The machine, she continued, was made in the United States and had a built-in recorded message; when her brother took off his personal message, a prerecorded American voice appeared.

I then asked about the phone numbers in the note. She shook her head in dismay. They added up to nothing, she said. They were merely those of two reporters her brother had spoken to, and the number of someone at Christie's.

Finally, I asked what she thought had happened to her brother. At one point, Scirard Lancelyn Green had told the London *Observer* that he thought murder was "entirely possible"; and, for all my attempts to build a case that transcended doubt, there were still questions. Hadn't the police told the coroner that an intruder could have locked Green's apartment door while slipping out, thus giving the illusion that his victim had died alone? Wasn't it possible that Green had known the murderer and simply let him in? And how could someone, even in a fit of madness, garrote himself with merely a shoelace and the help of a spoon?

His sister glanced away, as if trying one last time to arrange all the pieces. Then she said, "I don't think we'll ever know for sure what really happened. Unlike in detective stories, we have to live without answers." ♦

THE PICTURE PROBLEM

Mammography, air power, and the limits of looking.

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

At the beginning of the first Gulf War, the United States Air Force dispatched two squadrons of F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jets to find and destroy the Scud missiles that Iraq was firing at Israel. The rockets were being launched, mostly at night, from the backs of modified flatbed tractor-trailers, moving stealthily around a four-hundred-square-mile "Scud box" in the western desert. The plan was for the fighter jets to patrol the box from sunset to sunrise. When a Scud was launched, it would light up the night sky. An F-15E pilot would fly toward the launch point, follow the roads that crisscrossed the desert, and then locate the target using a state-of-the-art, \$4.6-million device called a LANTIRN navigation and targeting pod, capable of taking a high-resolution infrared photograph of a four-and-a-half-mile swath below the plane. How hard could it be to pick up a hulking tractor-trailer in the middle of an empty desert?

Almost immediately, reports of Scud kills began to come back from the field. The Desert Storm commanders were elated. "I remember going out to Nellis Air Force Base after the war," Barry Watts, a former Air Force colonel, says. "They did a big static display, and they had all the Air Force jets that flew in Desert Storm, and they had little placards in front of them, with a box score, explaining what this plane did and that plane did in the war. And, when you added up how many Scud launchers they claimed each got, the total was about a hundred." Air Force officials were not guessing at the number of Scud launchers hit; as far as they were concerned, they *knew*. They had a four-million-dollar camera, which took a nearly perfect picture, and there are few cultural reflexes more deeply ingrained than the idea that a picture has the weight of truth. "That photography not only does not, but cannot lie, is a matter of belief, an article of faith," Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner

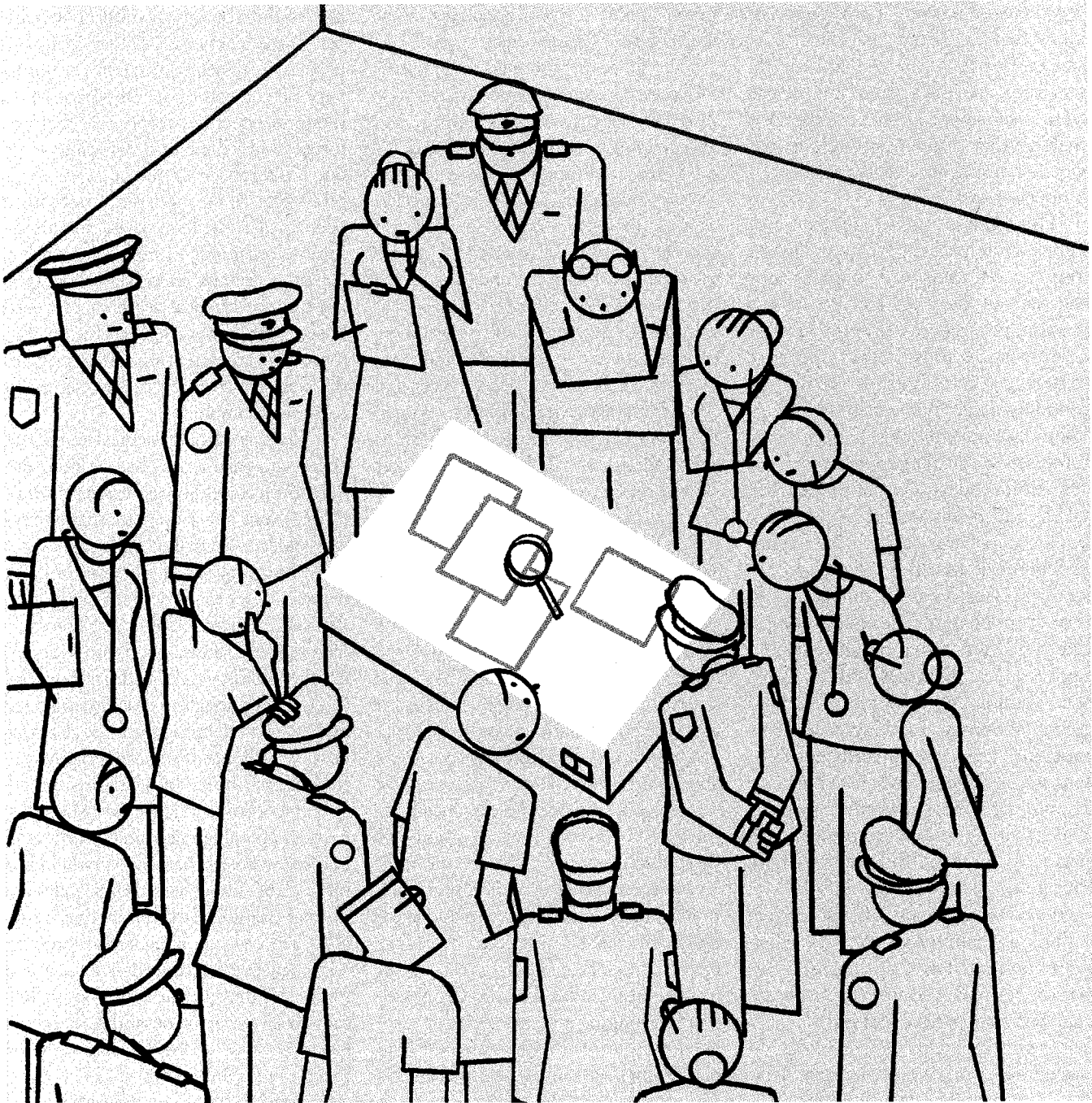
have written. "We tend to trust the camera more than our own eyes." Thus was victory declared in the Scud hunt—until hostilities ended and the Air Force appointed a team to determine the effectiveness of the air campaigns in Desert Storm. The actual number of definite Scud kills, the team said, was zero.

The problem was that the pilots were operating at night, when depth perception is impaired. LANTIRN could see in the dark, but the camera worked only when it was pointed in the right place, and the right place wasn't obvious. Meanwhile, the pilot had only about five minutes to find his quarry, because after launch the Iraqis would immediately hide in one of the many culverts underneath the highway between Baghdad and Jordan, and the screen the pilot was using to scan all that desert measured just six inches by six inches. "It was like driving down an interstate looking through a soda straw," Major General Mike DeCuir, who flew numerous Scud-hunt missions throughout the war, recalled. Nor was it clear what a Scud launcher looked like on that screen. "We had an intelligence photo of one on the ground. But you had to imagine what it would look like on a black-and-white screen from twenty thousand feet up and five or more miles away," DeCuir went on. "With the resolution we had at the time, you could tell something was a big truck and that it had wheels, but at that altitude it was hard to tell much more than that." The postwar analysis indicated that a number of the targets the pilots had hit were actually decoys, constructed by the Iraqis from old trucks and spare missile parts. Others were tanker trucks transporting oil on the highway to Jordan. A tanker truck, after all, is a tractor-trailer hauling a long, shiny cylindrical object, and, from twenty thousand feet up at four hundred miles an hour on a six-by-six-inch screen, a long, shiny cylindrical object can look a lot like a mis-

sile. "It's a problem we've always had," Watts, who served on the team that did the Gulf War analysis, said. "It's night out. You think you've got something on the sensor. You roll out your weapons. Bombs go off. It's really hard to tell what you did."

You can build a high-tech camera, capable of taking pictures in the middle of the night, in other words, but the system works only if the camera is pointed in the right place, and even then the pictures are not self-explanatory. They need to be interpreted, and the human task of interpretation is often a bigger obstacle than the technical task of picture-taking. This was the lesson of the Scud hunt: pictures promise to clarify but often confuse. The Zapruder film intensified rather than dispelled the controversy surrounding John F. Kennedy's assassination. The videotape of the beating of Rodney King led to widespread uproar about police brutality; it also served as the basis for a jury's decision to acquit the officers charged with the assault. Perhaps nowhere have these issues been so apparent, however, as in the arena of mammography. Radiologists developed state-of-the-art X-ray cameras and used them to scan women's breasts for tumors, reasoning that, if you can take a nearly perfect picture, you can find and destroy tumors before they go on to do serious damage. Yet there remains a great deal of confusion about the benefits of mammography. Is it possible that we place too much faith in pictures?

The head of breast imaging at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, in New York City, is a physician named David Dershaw, a youthful man in his fifties, who bears a striking resemblance to the actor Kevin Spacey. One morning not long ago, he sat down in his office at the back of the Sloan-Kettering Building and tried to explain how to read a mammogram.



The visual image promises a privileged way of knowing—access to reality itself. But what if we don't know what we're seeing?

Dershaw began by putting an X-ray on a light box behind his desk. "Cancer shows up as one of two patterns," he said. "You look for lumps and bumps, and you look for calcium. And, if you find it, you have to make a determination: is it acceptable, or is it a pattern that might be due to cancer?" He pointed at the X-ray. "This woman has cancer. She has these tiny little calcifications. Can you see them? Can you see how small they are?" He took out a magnifying glass and placed it over a series of white flecks; as a cancer grows, it produces calcium deposits. "That's the stuff we are looking for," he said.

Then Dershaw added a series of slides to the light box and began to explain all the varieties that those white flecks came in. Some calcium deposits are oval and lucent. "They're called egg-shell calcifications," Dershaw said. "And they're basically benign." Another kind of calcium runs like a railway track on either side of the breast's many blood vessels—that's benign, too. "Then there's calcium that's thick and heavy and looks like popcorn," Dershaw went on. "That's just dead tissue. That's benign. There's another calcification that's little sacs of calcium floating in liquid. It's called 'milk

of calcium.' That's another kind of calcium that's always benign." He put a new set of slides against the light. "Then we have calcium that looks like this—irregular. All of these are of different density and different sizes and different configurations. Those are usually benign, but sometimes they are due to cancer. Remember you saw those railway tracks? This is calcium laid down inside a tube as well, but you can see that the outside of the tube is irregular. That's cancer." Dershaw's explanations were beginning to be confusing. "There are certain calcifications in benign tissues that are al-

ways benign," he said. "There are certain kinds that are always associated with cancer. But those are the ends of the spectrum, and the vast amount of calcium is somewhere in the middle. And making that differentiation, between whether the calcium is acceptable or not, is not clear-cut."

The same is true of lumps. Some lumps are simply benign clumps of cells. You can tell they are benign because the walls of the mass look round and smooth; in a cancer, cells proliferate so wildly that the walls of the tumor tend to be ragged and to intrude into the surrounding tissue. But sometimes benign lumps resemble tumors, and sometimes tumors look a lot like benign lumps. And sometimes you have lots of masses that, taken individually, would be suspicious but are so pervasive that the reasonable conclusion is that this is just how the woman's breast looks. "If you have a CAT scan of the chest, the heart always looks like the heart, the aorta always looks like the aorta," Dershaw said. "So when there's a lump in the middle of that, it's clearly abnormal. Looking at a mammogram is conceptually different from looking at images elsewhere in the body. Everything else has anatomy—anatomy that essentially looks the same from one person to the next. But we don't have that kind of standardized information on the breast. The most difficult decision I think anybody needs to make when we're confronted with a patient is: Is this person normal? And we have to decide that without a pattern that is reasonably stable from individual to individual, and sometimes even without a pattern that is the same from the left side to the right."

Dershaw was saying that mammography doesn't fit our normal expectations of pictures. In the days before the invention of photography, for instance, a horse in motion was represented in drawings and paintings according to the convention of *ventre à terre*, or "belly to the ground." Horses were drawn with their front legs extended beyond their heads, and their hind legs stretched straight back, because that was the way, in the blur of movement, a horse seemed to gallop. Then, in the eighteen-seventies, came Eadweard Muybridge, with his famous sequential photographs of a galloping horse, and that was the end of *ventre à terre*. Now we knew how a horse galloped. The photo-

graph promised that we would now be able to capture reality itself.

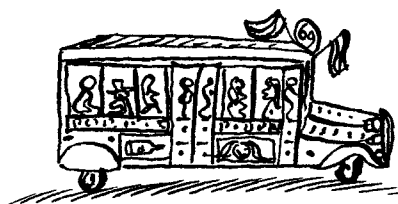
The situation with mammography is different. The way in which we ordinarily speak about calcium and lumps is clear and unambiguous. But the picture demonstrates how blurry those seemingly distinct categories actually are. Joann Elmore, a physician and epidemiologist at the University of Washington Harborview Medical Center, once asked ten board-certified radiologists to look at a hundred and fifty mammograms—of which twenty-seven had come from women who developed breast cancer, and a hundred and twenty-three from women who were known to have been healthy. One radiologist caught eighty-five per cent of the cancers the first time around. Another caught only thirty-seven per cent. One looked at the same X-rays and saw suspicious masses in seventy-eight per cent of the cases. Another doctor saw "focal asymmetric density" in half of the cancer cases; yet another saw no "focal asymmetric density" at all. There was one particularly perplexing mammogram that three radiologists thought was normal, two thought was abnormal but probably benign, four couldn't make up their minds about, and one was convinced was cancer. (The patient was fine.) Some of these differences are a matter of skill, and there is good evidence that with more rigorous training and experience radiologists can become better at reading breast X-rays. But so much of what can be seen on an X-ray falls into a gray area that interpreting a mammogram is also, in part, a matter of temperament. Some radiologists see something ambiguous and are comfortable calling it normal. Others see something ambiguous and get suspicious.

Does that mean radiologists ought to be as suspicious as possible? You might think so, but caution simply creates another kind of problem. The radiologist in the Elmore study who caught the most cancers also recommended immediate workups—a biopsy, an ultrasound, or additional X-rays—on sixty-four per

cent of the women who didn't have cancer. In the real world, a radiologist who needlessly subjected such an extraordinary percentage of healthy patients to the time, expense, anxiety, and discomfort of biopsies and further testing would find himself seriously out of step with his profession. Mammography is not a form of medical treatment, where doctors are justified in going to heroic lengths on behalf of their patients. Mammography is a form of medical *screening*: it is supposed to exclude the healthy, so that more time and attention can be given to the sick. If screening doesn't screen, it ceases to be useful.

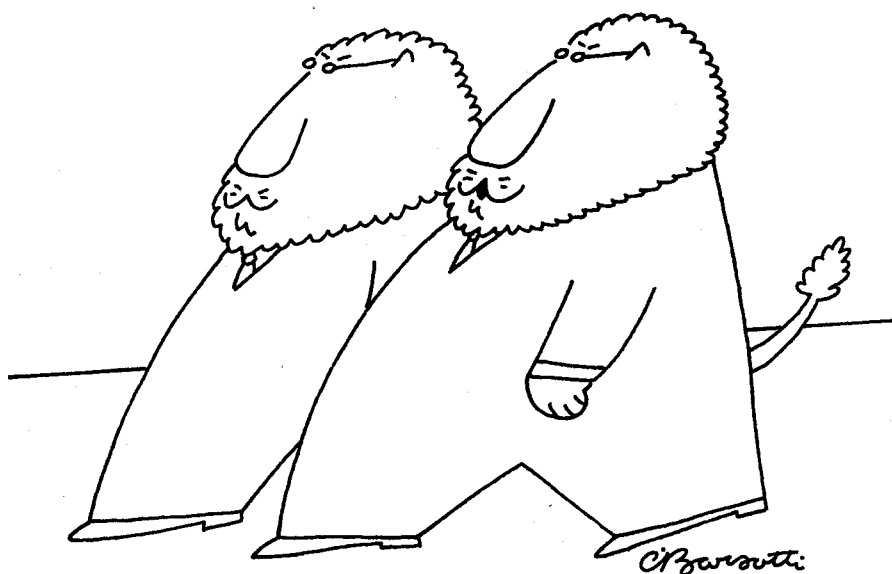
Gilbert Welch, a medical-outcomes expert at Dartmouth, has pointed out that, given current breast-cancer mortality rates, nine out of every thousand sixty-year-old women will die of breast cancer in the next ten years. If every one of those women had a mammogram every year, that number would fall to six. The radiologist seeing those thousand women, in other words, would read ten thousand X-rays over a decade in order to save three lives—and that's using the most generous possible estimate of mammography's effectiveness. The reason a radiologist is required to assume that the overwhelming number of ambiguous things are normal, in other words, is that the overwhelming number of ambiguous things really are normal. Radiologists are, in this sense, a lot like baggage screeners at airports. The chances are that the dark mass in the middle of the suitcase isn't a bomb, because you've seen a thousand dark masses like it in suitcases before, and none of those were bombs—and if you flagged every suitcase with something ambiguous in it no one would ever make his flight. But that doesn't mean, of course, that it isn't a bomb. All you have to go on is what it looks like on the X-ray screen—and the screen seldom gives you quite enough information.

Dershaw picked up a new X-ray and put it on the light box. It belonged to a forty-eight-year-old woman. Mammograms indicate density in the breast: the denser the tissue is, the more the X rays are absorbed, creating the variations in black and white that make up the picture. Fat hardly absorbs the beam at all, so it shows up as black. Breast tissue, particularly the thick breast tissue of



younger women, shows up on an X-ray as shades of light gray or white. This woman's breasts consisted of fat at the back of the breast and more dense, glandular tissue toward the front, so the X-ray was entirely black, with what looked like a large white, dense cloud behind the nipple. Clearly visible, in the black, fatty portion of the left breast, was a white spot. "Now, that looks like a cancer, that little smudgy, irregular, infiltrative thing," Dershow said. "It's about five millimetres across." He looked at the X-ray for a moment. This was mammography at its best: a clear picture of a problem that needed to be fixed. Then he took a pen and pointed to the thick cloud just to the right of the tumor. The cloud and the tumor were exactly the same color. "That cancer only shows up because it's in the fatty part of the breast," he said. "If you take that cancer and put it in the dense part of the breast, you'd never see it, because the whiteness of the mass is the same as the whiteness of normal tissue. If the tumor was over there, it could be four times as big and we still wouldn't see it."

What's more, mammography is especially likely to miss the tumors that do the most harm. A team led by the research pathologist Peggy Porter analyzed four hundred and twenty-nine breast cancers that had been diagnosed over five years at the Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound. Of those, two hundred and seventy-nine were picked up by mammography, and the bulk of them were detected very early, at what is called Stage One. (Cancer is classified into four stages, according to how far the tumor has spread from its original position.) Most of the tumors were small, less than two centimetres. Pathologists grade a tumor's aggression according to such measures as the "mitotic count"—the rate at which the cells are dividing—and the screen-detected tumors were graded "low" in almost seventy per cent of the cases. These were the kinds of cancers that could probably be treated successfully. "Most tumors develop very, very slowly, and those tend to lay down calcium deposits—and what mammograms are doing is picking up those calcifications," Leslie Laufman, a hematologist-oncologist in Ohio, who served on a recent National Institutes of Health breast-cancer advisory panel, said. "Almost by definition, mam-



"Damn straight—if the food chain ain't broke, don't fix it."

mograms are picking up slow-growing tumors."

A hundred and fifty cancers in Porter's study, however, were missed by mammography. Some of these were tumors the mammogram couldn't see—that were, for instance, hiding in the dense part of the breast. The majority, though, simply didn't exist at the time of the mammogram. These cancers were found in women who had had regular mammograms, and who were legitimately told that they showed no sign of cancer on their last visit. In the interval between X-rays, however, either they or their doctor had manually discovered a lump in their breast, and these "interval" cancers were twice as likely to be in Stage Three and three times as likely to have high mitotic counts; twenty-eight per cent had spread to the lymph nodes, as opposed to eighteen per cent of the screen-detected cancers. These tumors were so aggressive that they had gone from undetectable to detectable in the interval between two mammograms.

The problem of interval tumors explains why the overwhelming majority of breast-cancer experts insist that women in the critical fifty-to-sixty-nine age group get regular mammograms. In Porter's study, the women were X-rayed at intervals as great as every three years, and that created a window large enough for interval cancers to emerge. Interval cancers also explain why many breast-cancer

experts believe that mammograms must be supplemented by regular and thorough clinical breast exams. ("Thorough" is defined as palpation of the area from the collarbone to the bottom of the rib cage, one dime-size area at a time, at three levels of pressure—just below the skin, the mid-breast, and up against the chest wall—by a specially trained practitioner for a period not less than five minutes per breast.) In a major study of mammography's effectiveness—one of a pair of Canadian trials conducted in the nineteen-eighties—women who were given regular, thorough breast exams but no mammograms were compared with those who had thorough breast exams and regular mammograms, and no difference was found in the death rates from breast cancer between the two groups. The Canadian studies are controversial, and some breast-cancer experts are convinced that they may have understated the benefits of mammography. But there is no denying the basic lessons of the Canadian trials: that a skilled pair of fingertips can find out an extraordinary amount about the health of a breast, and that we should not automatically value what we see in a picture over what we learn from our other senses.

"The finger has hundreds of sensors per square centimetre," says Mark Goldstein, a sensory psychophysicist who co-founded MammaCare, a company devoted to training nurses and physicians in



"Everybody thinks I'm in rehab."

the art of the clinical exam. "There is nothing in science or technology that has even come close to the sensitivity of the human finger with respect to the range of stimuli it can pick up. It's a brilliant instrument. But we simply don't trust our tactile sense as much as our visual sense."

On the night of August 17, 1943, two hundred B-17 bombers from the United States Eighth Air Force set out from England for the German city of Schweinfurt. Two months later, two hundred and twenty-eight B-17s set out to strike Schweinfurt a second time. The raids were two of the heaviest nights of bombing in the war, and the Allied experience at Schweinfurt is an example of a more subtle—but in some cases more serious—problem with the picture paradigm.

The Schweinfurt raids grew out of the United States military's commitment to bombing accuracy. As Stephen Budiansky writes in his wonderful recent book "Air Power," the chief lesson of aerial bombardment in the First World War was that hitting a target from eight or ten thousand feet was a prohibitively dif-

ficult task. In the thick of battle, the bombardier had to adjust for the speed of the plane, the speed and direction of the prevailing winds, and the pitching and rolling of the plane, all while keeping the bombsight level with the ground. It was an impossible task, requiring complex trigonometric calculations. For a variety of reasons, including the technical challenges, the British simply abandoned the quest for precision: in both the First World War and the Second, the British military pursued a strategy of "morale" or "area" bombing, in which bombs were simply dropped, indiscriminately, on urban areas, with the intention of killing, dispossessing, and dispiriting the German civilian population.

But the American military believed that the problem of bombing accuracy was solvable, and a big part of the solution was something called the Norden bombsight. This breakthrough was the work of a solitary, cantankerous genius named Carl Norden, who operated out of a factory in New York City. Norden built a fifty-pound mechanical computer called the Mark XV, which used gears and wheels and gyroscopes to calculate

airspeed, altitude, and crosswinds in order to determine the correct bomb-release point. The Mark XV, Norden's business partner boasted, could put a bomb in a pickle barrel from twenty thousand feet. The United States spent \$1.5 billion developing it, which, as Budiansky points out, was more than half the amount that was spent building the atomic bomb. "At air bases, the Nordens were kept under lock and key in secure vaults, escorted to their planes by armed guards, and shrouded in a canvas cover until after takeoff," Budiansky recounts. The American military, convinced that its bombers could now hit whatever they could see, developed a strategic approach to bombing, identifying and selectively destroying targets that were critical to the Nazi war effort. In early 1943, General Henry (Hap) Arnold—the head of the Army Air Forces— assembled a group of prominent civilians to analyze the German economy and recommend critical targets. The Advisory Committee on Bombardment, as it was called, determined that the United States should target Germany's ball-bearing factories, since ball bearings were critical to the manufacture of airplanes. And the center of the German ball-bearing industry was Schweinfurt. Allied losses from the two raids were staggering. Thirty-six B-17s were shot down in the August attack, sixty-two bombers were shot down in the October raid, and between the two operations a further hundred and thirty-eight planes were badly damaged. Yet, with the war in the balance, this was considered worth the price. When the damage reports came in, Arnold exulted, "Now we have got Schweinfurt!" He was wrong.

The problem was not, as in the case of the Scud hunt, that the target could not be found, or that what was thought to be the target was actually something else. The B-17s, aided by their Norden Mark XV's, hit the ball-bearing factories hard. The problem was that the picture Air Force officers had of their target didn't tell them what they really needed to know. The Germans, it emerged, had ample stockpiles of ball bearings. They also had no difficulty increasing their imports from Sweden and Switzerland, and, through a few simple design changes, they were able to greatly reduce their need for ball bearings in aircraft produc-

tion. What's more, although the factory buildings were badly damaged by the bombing, the machinery inside wasn't. Ball-bearing equipment turned out to be surprisingly hardy. "As it was, not a tank, plane, or other piece of weaponry failed to be produced because of lack of ball bearings," Albert Speer, the Nazi production chief, wrote after the war. Seeing a problem and understanding it, then, are two different things.

In recent years, with the rise of highly accurate long-distance weaponry, the Schweinfurt problem has become even more acute. If you can aim at and hit the kitchen at the back of a house, after all, you don't have to bomb the whole building. So your bomb can be two hundred pounds rather than a thousand. That means, in turn, that you can fit five times as many bombs on a single plane and hit five times as many targets in a single sortie, which sounds good—except that now you need to get intelligence on five times as many targets. And that intelligence has to be five times more specific, because if the target is in the bedroom and not the kitchen, you've missed him.

This is the issue that the United States command faced in the most recent Iraq war. Early in the campaign, the military mounted a series of air strikes against specific targets, where Saddam Hussein or other senior Baathist officials were thought to be hiding. There were fifty of these so-called "decapitation" attempts, each taking advantage of the fact that modern-day G.P.S.-guided bombs can be delivered from a fighter to within thirteen metres of their intended target. The strikes were dazzling in their precision. In one case, a restaurant was levelled. In another, a bomb burrowed down into a basement. But, in the end, every single strike failed. "The issue isn't accuracy," Watts, who has written extensively on the limitations of high-tech weaponry, says. "The issue is the quality of targeting information. The amount of information we need has gone up an order of magnitude or two in the last decade."

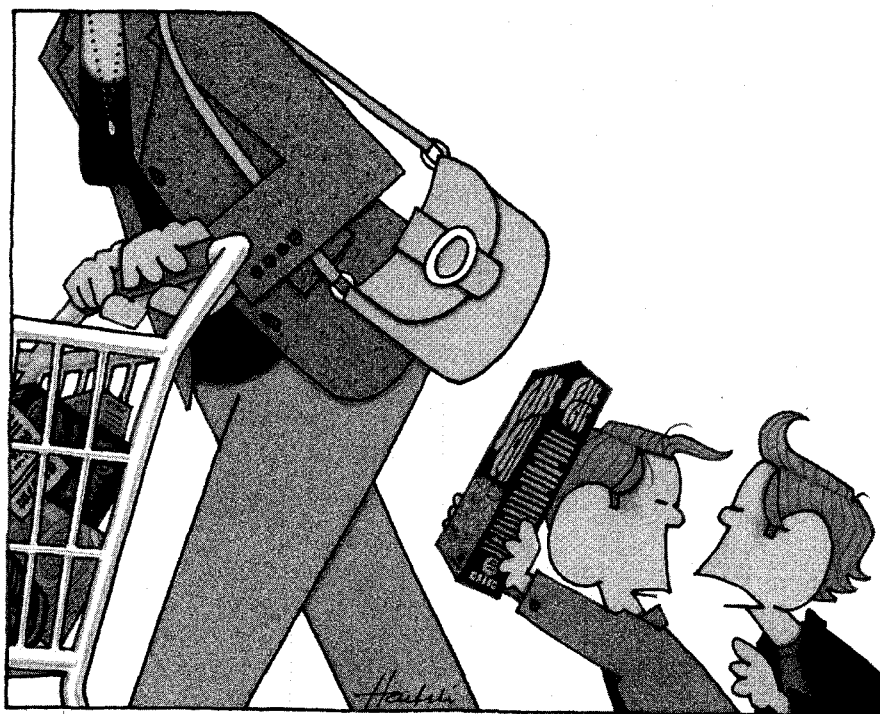
Mammography has a Schweinfurt problem as well. Nowhere is that more evident than in the case of the breast lesion known as ductal carcinoma in situ, or DCIS, which shows up as a cluster of calcifications inside the ducts

that carry milk to the nipple. It's a tumor that hasn't spread beyond those ducts, and it is so tiny that without mammography few women with DCIS would ever know they had it. In the past couple of decades, as more and more people have received regular breast X-rays and the resolution of mammography has increased, diagnoses of DCIS have soared. About fifty thousand new cases are now found every year in the United States, and virtually every DCIS lesion detected by mammography is promptly removed. But what has the targeting and destruction of DCIS meant for the battle against breast cancer? You'd expect that if we've been catching fifty thousand early-stage cancers every year, we should be seeing a corresponding decrease in the number of late-stage invasive cancers. It's not clear whether we have. During the past twenty years, the incidence of invasive breast cancer has continued to rise by the same small, steady increment every year.

In 1987, pathologists in Denmark performed a series of autopsies of women in their forties who had not been known to have breast cancer when they died of other causes. The pathologists looked at an average of two hundred and seventy-five samples of breast tissue in each case, and found some evidence of cancer—usually DCIS—in nearly forty per cent

of the women. Since breast cancer accounts for less than four per cent of female deaths, clearly the overwhelming majority of these women, had they lived longer, would never have died of breast cancer. "To me, that indicates that these kinds of genetic changes happen really frequently, and that they can happen without having an impact on women's health," Karla Kerlikowske, a breast-cancer expert at the University of California at San Francisco, says. "The body has this whole mechanism to repair things, and maybe that's what happened with these tumors." Gilbert Welch, the medical-outcomes expert, thinks that we fail to understand the hit-or-miss nature of cancerous growth, and assume it to be a process that, in the absence of intervention, will eventually kill us. "A pathologist from the International Agency for Research on Cancer once told me that the biggest mistake we ever made was attaching the word 'carcinoma' to DCIS," Welch says. "The minute carcinoma got linked to it, it all of a sudden drove doctors to recommend therapy, because what was implied was that this was a lesion that would inexorably progress to invasive cancer. But we know that that's not always the case."

In some percentage of cases, however, DCIS does progress to something more serious. Some studies suggest that



"She'll buy it for us. We just have to stay on message."

this happens very infrequently. Others suggest that it happens frequently enough to be of major concern. There is no definitive answer, and it's all but impossible to tell, simply by looking at a mammogram, whether a given DCIS tumor is among those lesions which will grow out from the duct or part of the majority that will never amount to anything. That's why some doctors feel that we have no choice but to treat every DCIS as life-threatening, and in thirty per cent of cases that means a mastectomy, and in another thirty-five per cent it means a lumpectomy and radiation. Would taking a better picture solve the problem? Not really, because the problem is that you don't know for sure what you're seeing, and as pictures have become better we have put ourselves in a position where we see more and more things that we don't know how to interpret. When it comes to DCIS, the mammogram delivers information without true understanding. "Almost half a million women have been diagnosed and treated for DCIS since the early nineteen-eighties—a diagnosis virtually unknown before then," Welch writes in his new book, "Should I Be Tested for Cancer?," a brilliant account of the statistical and medical uncertainties surrounding cancer screening. "This increase is the direct result of look-

ing harder—in this case with 'better' mammography equipment. But I think you can see why it is a diagnosis that some women might reasonably prefer not to know about."

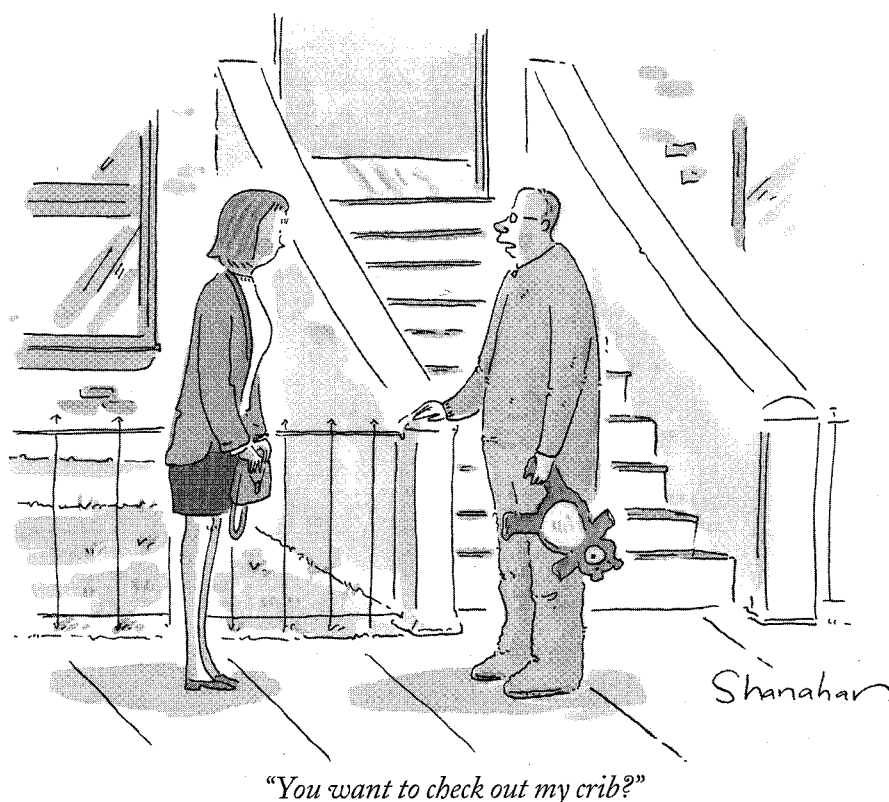
The disturbing thing about DCIS, of course, is that our approach to this tumor seems like a textbook example of how the battle against cancer is supposed to work. Use a powerful camera. Take a detailed picture. Spot the tumor as early as possible. Treat it immediately and aggressively. The campaign to promote regular mammograms has used this early-detection argument with great success, because it makes intuitive sense. The danger posed by a tumor is represented visually. Large is bad; small is better—less likely to have metastasized. But here, too, tumors defy our visual intuitions.

According to Donald Berry, who is the chairman of the Department of Biostatistics and Applied Mathematics at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, in Houston, a woman's risk of death increases only by about ten per cent for every additional centimetre in tumor length. "Suppose there is a tumor size above which the tumor is lethal, and below which it's not," Berry says. "The problem is that the threshold varies. When we find a tumor, we don't know

whether it has metastasized already. And we don't know whether it's tumor size that drives the metastatic process or whether all you need is a few million cells to start sloughing off to other parts of the body. We do observe that it's worse to have a bigger tumor. But not amazingly worse. The relationship is not as great as you'd think."

In a recent genetic analysis of breast-cancer tumors, scientists selected women with breast cancer who had been followed for many years, and divided them into two groups—those whose cancer had gone into remission, and those whose cancer spread to the rest of their body. Then the scientists went back to the earliest moment that each cancer became apparent, and analyzed thousands of genes in order to determine whether it was possible to predict, at that moment, who was going to do well and who wasn't. Early detection presumes that it isn't possible to make that prediction: a tumor is removed before it becomes truly dangerous. But scientists discovered that even with tumors in the one-centimetre range—the range in which cancer is first picked up by a mammogram—the fate of the cancer seems already to have been set. "What we found is that there is biology that you can glean from the tumor, at the time you take it out, that is strongly predictive of whether or not it will go on to metastasize," Stephen Friend, a member of the gene-expression team at Merck, says. "We like to think of a small tumor as an innocent. The reality is that in that innocent lump are a lot of behaviors that spell a potential poor or good prognosis."

The good news here is that it might eventually be possible to screen breast cancers on a genetic level, using other kinds of tests—even blood tests—to look for the biological traces of those genes. This might also help with the chronic problem of overtreatment in breast cancer. If we can single out that small percentage of women whose tumors will metastasize, we can spare the rest the usual regimen of surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. Gene-signature research is one of a number of reasons that many scientists are optimistic about the fight against breast cancer. But it is an advance that has nothing to do with taking more pictures, or taking better pictures. It has to do with going beyond the picture.



Under the circumstances, it is not hard to understand why mammography draws so much controversy. The picture promises certainty, and it cannot deliver on that promise. Even after forty years of research, there remains widespread disagreement over how much benefit women in the critical fifty-to-sixty-nine age bracket receive from breast X-rays, and further disagreement about whether there is enough evidence to justify regular mammography in women under fifty and over seventy. Is there any way to resolve the disagreement? Donald Berry says that there probably isn't—that a clinical trial that could definitively answer the question of mammography's precise benefits would have to be so large (involving more than five hundred thousand women) and so expensive (costing billions of dollars) as to be impractical. The resulting confusion has turned radiologists who do mammograms into one of the chief targets of malpractice litigation. "The problem is that mammographers—radiology groups—do hundreds of thousands of these mammograms, giving women the illusion that these things work and they are good, and if a lump is found and in most cases if it is found early, they tell women they have the probability of a higher survival rate," says E. Clay Parker, a Florida plaintiff's attorney, who recently won a \$5.1 million judgment against an Orlando radiologist. "But then, when it comes to defending themselves, they tell you that the reality is that it doesn't make a difference when you find it. So you scratch your head and say, 'Well, why do you do mammography, then?'"

The answer is that mammograms do not have to be infallible to save lives. A modest estimate of mammography's benefit is that it reduces the risk of dying from breast cancer by about ten per cent—which works out, for the average woman in her fifties, to be about three extra days of life, or, to put it another way, a health benefit on a par with wearing a helmet on a ten-hour bicycle trip. That is not a trivial benefit. Multiplied across the millions of adult women in the United States, it amounts to thousands of lives saved every year, and, in combination with a medical regimen that includes radiation, surgery, and new and promising drugs, it has helped brighten the prognosis for women with breast can-

cer. Mammography isn't as good as we'd like it to be. But we are still better off than we would be without it.

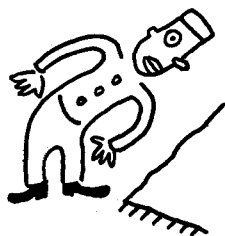
"There is increasingly an understanding among those of us who do this a lot that our efforts to sell mammography may have been over-vigorous," Dershaw said, "and that although we didn't intend to, the perception may have been that mammography accomplishes even more than it does." He was looking, as he spoke, at the mammogram of the woman whose tumor would have been invisible had it been a few centimetres to the right. Did looking at an X-ray like that make him nervous? Dershaw shook his head. "You have to respect the limitations of the technology," he said. "My job with the mammogram isn't to find what I can't find with a mammogram. It's to find what I can find with a mammogram. If I'm not going to accept that, then I shouldn't be reading mammograms."

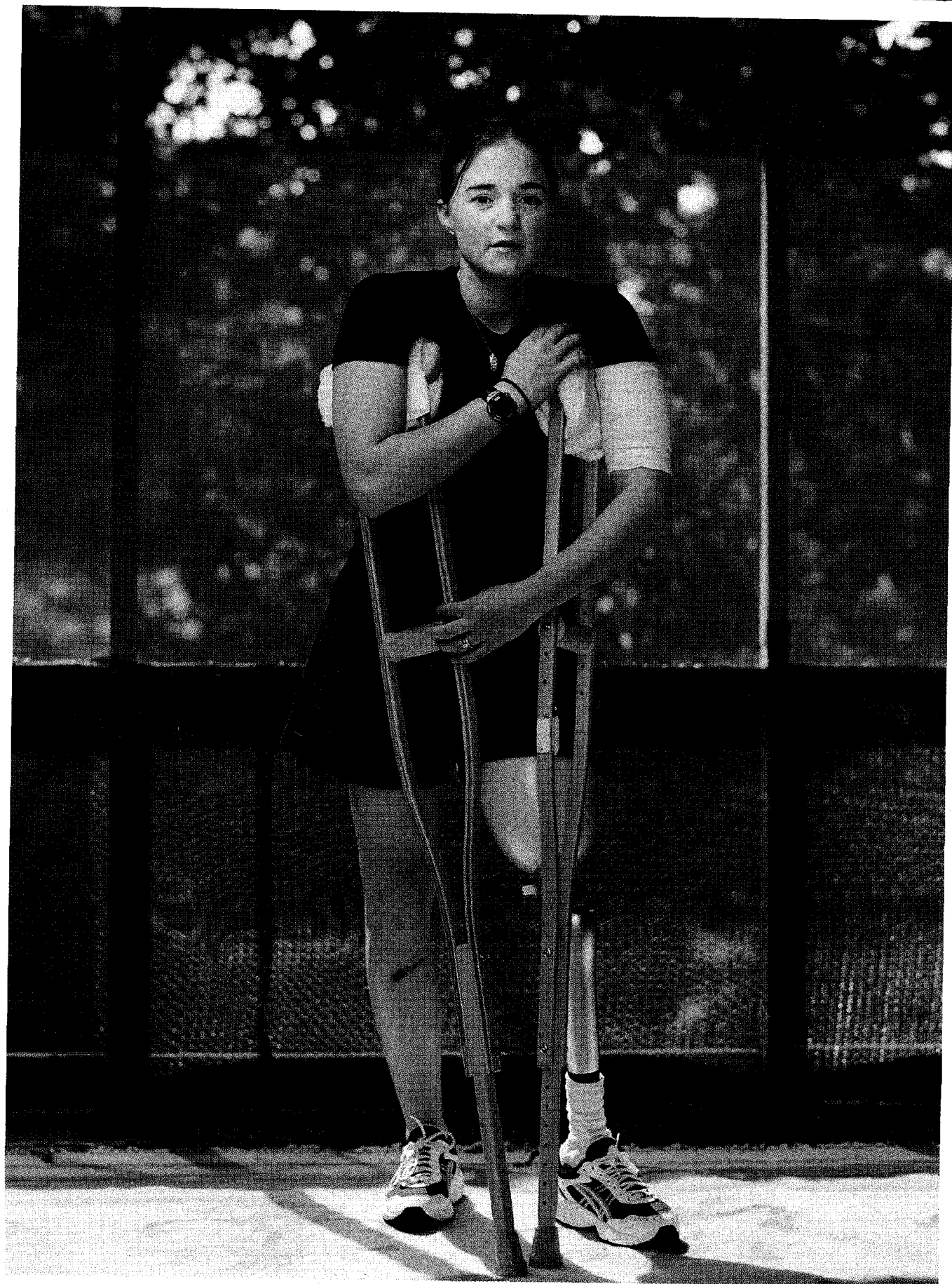
In February of last year, just before the start of the Iraq war, Secretary of State Colin Powell went before the United Nations to declare that Iraq was in defiance of international law. He presented transcripts of telephone conversations between senior Iraqi military officials, purportedly discussing attempts to conceal weapons of mass destruction. He told of eyewitness accounts of mobile biological-weapons facilities. And, most persuasively, he presented a series of images—carefully annotated, high-resolution satellite photographs of what he said was the Taji Iraqi chemical-munitions facility.

"Let me say a word about satellite images before I show a couple," Powell began. "The photos that I am about to show you are sometimes hard for the average person to interpret, hard for me. The painstaking work of photo analysis takes experts with years and years of experience, poring for hours and hours over light tables. But as I show you these images, I will try to capture and explain what they mean, what they indicate, to our imagery specialists." The first photograph was dated November 10, 2002, just three months earlier, and years after the Iraqis were supposed to have rid themselves of all weapons of mass de-

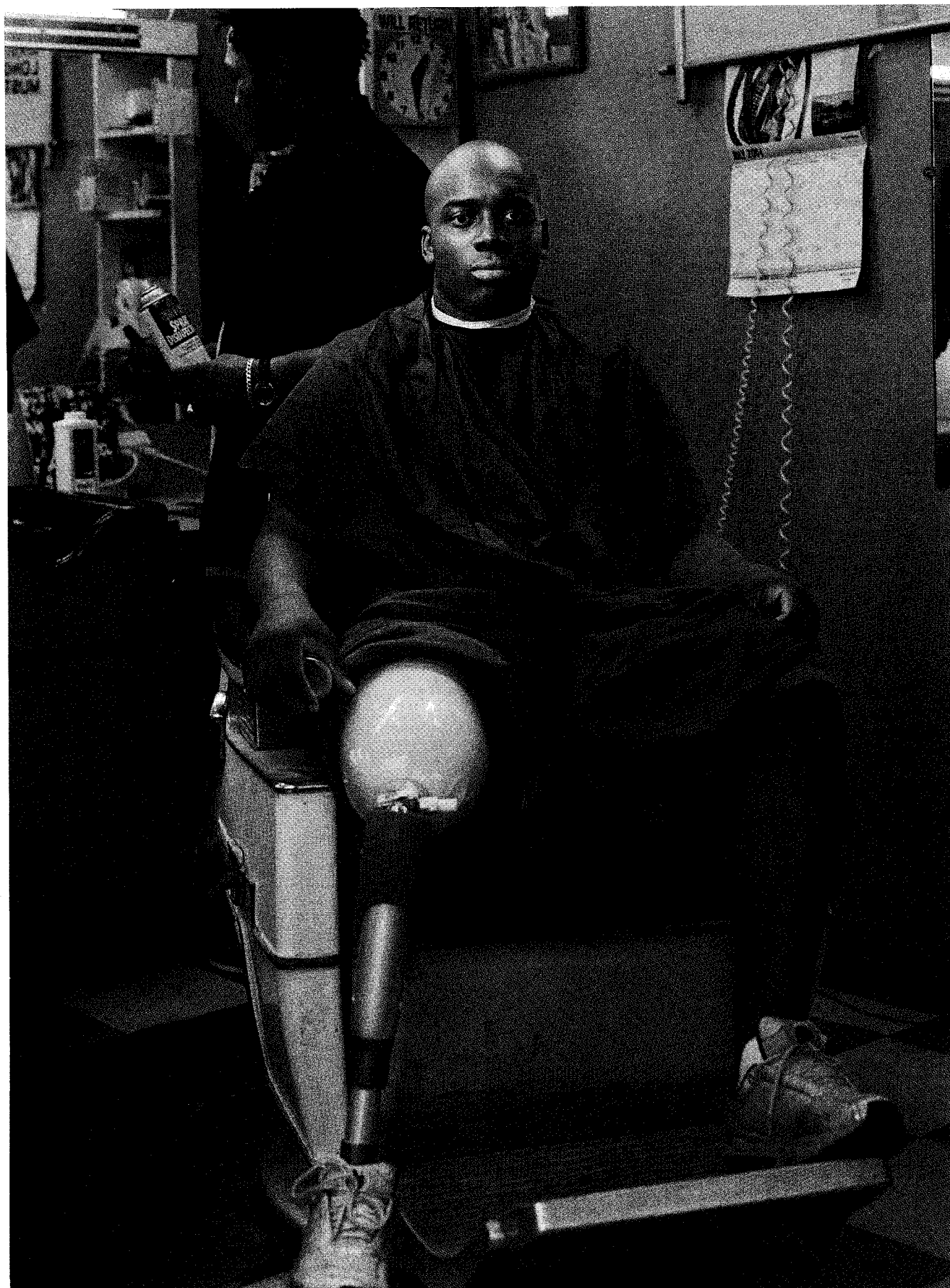
struction. "Let me give you a closer look," Powell said as he flipped to a closeup of the first photograph. It showed a rectangular building, with a vehicle parked next to it. "Look at the image on the left. On the left is a closeup of one of the four chemical bunkers. The two arrows indicate the presence of sure signs that the bunkers are storing chemical munitions. The arrow at the top that says 'Security' points to a facility that is a signature item for this kind of bunker. Inside that facility are special guards and special equipment to monitor any leakage that might come out of the bunker." Then he moved to the vehicle next to the building. It was, he said, another signature item. "It's a decontamination vehicle in case something goes wrong. . . . It is moving around those four and it moves as needed to move as people are working in the different bunkers."

Powell's analysis assumed, of course, that you could tell from the picture what kind of truck it was. But pictures of trucks, taken from above, are not always as clear as we would like; sometimes trucks hauling oil tanks look just like trucks hauling Scud launchers, and, while a picture is a good start, if you really want to know what you're looking at you probably need more than a picture. I looked at the photographs with Patrick Eddington, who for many years was an imagery analyst with the C.I.A. Eddington examined them closely. "They're trying to say that those are decontamination vehicles," he told me. He had a photo up on his laptop, and he peered closer to get a better look. "But the resolution is sufficient for me to say that I don't think it is—and I don't see any other decontamination vehicles down there that I would recognize." The standard decontamination vehicle was a Soviet-made box-body van, Eddington said. This truck was too long. For a second opinion, Eddington recommended Ray McGovern, a twenty-seven-year C.I.A. analyst, who had been one of George H. W. Bush's personal intelligence briefers when he was Vice-President. "If you're an expert, you can tell one hell of a lot from pictures like this," McGovern said. He'd heard another interpretation. "I think," he said, "that it's a fire truck." ♦





WAR WOUNDS BY MARTIN SCHOELLER *First Lieutenant Melissa Stockwell, twenty-four, 27th Main Support Battalion, First Cavalry Division. The Humvee she was riding in hit a roadside bomb between Taji and Baghdad on April 13th.*



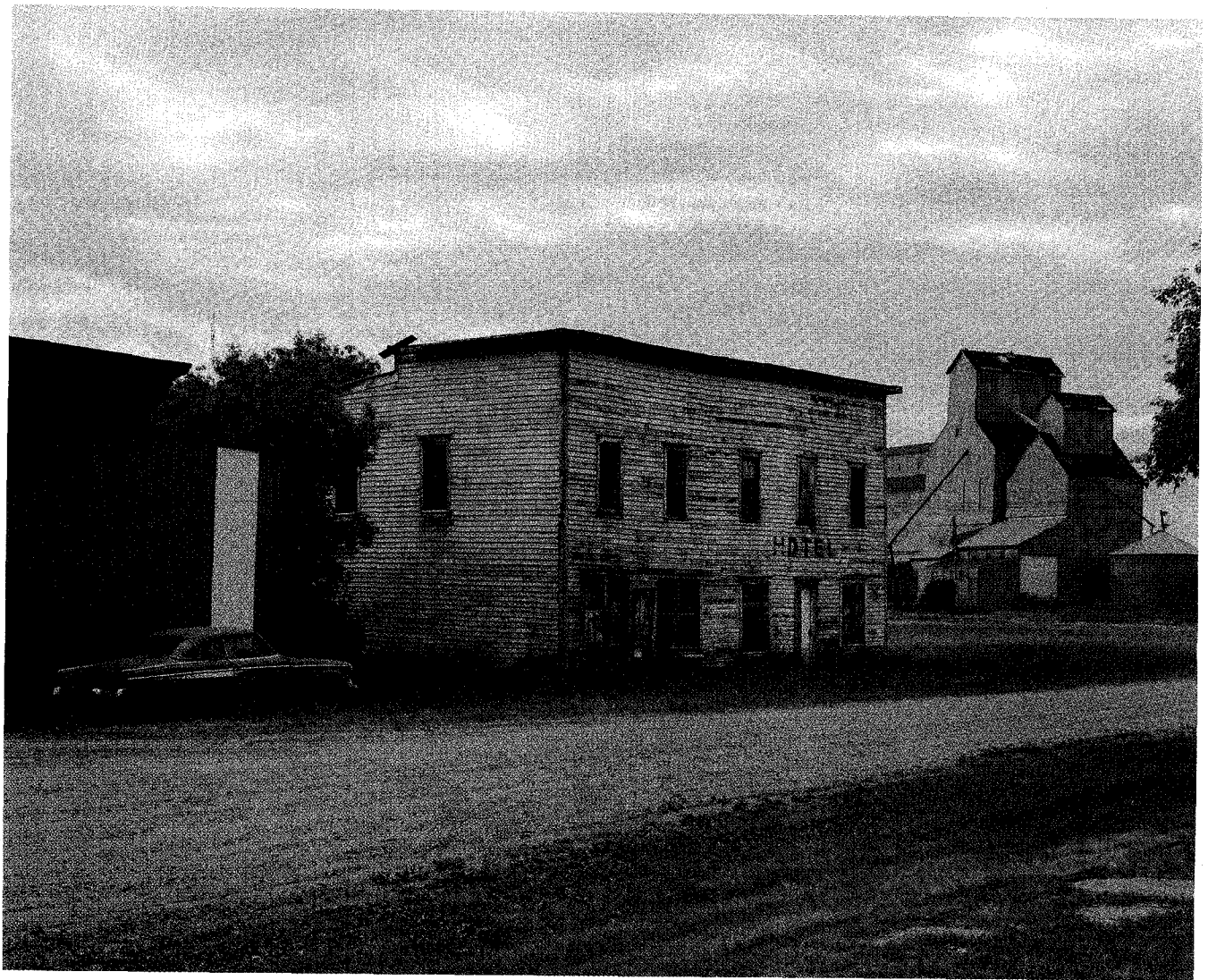
CORBIS

Staff Sergeant Hilbert Caesar, twenty-seven, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery. He was wounded on a mission in Baghdad, when his vehicle was hit by shrapnel from a bomb. Born in Guyana, he became an American citizen after his return from Iraq.

FICTION

DISASTER STAMPS OF PLUTO

BY LOUISE ERDRICH



The dead of Pluto now outnumber the living, and the cemetery stretches up the low hill east of town in a jagged display of white stone. There is no bar, no theatre, no hardware store, no creamery or car repair, just a gas pump. Even the priest comes to the church only once a month. The grass is barely mowed in time for his visit, and of course there are no flowers planted. But when the priest does come, there is at least one more person for the town café to feed.

That there is a town café is something of a surprise, and it is no run-down questionable edifice. When the bank pulled out, the family whose drive-in was destroyed by heavy winds bought the building with their insurance money. The granite façade, arched windows, and twenty-foot ceilings make the café seem solid and even luxurious. There is a blackboard for specials and a cigar box by the cash register for the extra change that people might donate to the hospital care of a local boy who was piteously hurt in a farming accident. I spend a good part of my day, as do most of the people left here, in a booth at the café. For now that there is no point in keeping up our municipal buildings, the café serves as office space for town-council and hobby-club members, church-society and card-playing groups. It is an informal staging area for shopping trips to the nearest mall—sixty-eight miles south—and a place for the town's few young mothers to meet and talk, pushing their car-seat-convertible strollers back and forth with one foot while hooting and swearing as intensely as their husbands, down at the other end of the row of booths. Those left spouseless or childless, owing to war or distance or attrition, eat here. Also divorced or single persons like myself who, for one reason or another, have ended up with a house in Pluto, North Dakota, their only major possession.

We are still here because to sell our houses for a fraction of their original price would leave us renters for life in the world outside. Yet, however tenaciously we cling to yards and living rooms and garages, the grip of one or two of us is broken every year. We are growing fewer. Our town is dying. And I am in charge of more than I bargained for when, in 1991, in the year of my retirement from medicine, I was elected president of Pluto's historical society.

At the time, it looked as though we might survive, if not flourish, well into the next millennium. But then came the flood of 1997, followed by the cost of rebuilding. Smalls' bearing works and the farm-implement dealership moved east. We were left with flaxseed and sunflowers, but cheap transport via the interstate had pretty much knocked us out of the game already. So we have begun to steadily diminish, and, as we do, I am becoming the repository of many untold stories such as people will finally tell when they know that there is no use in keeping secrets, or when they realize that all that's left of a place will one day reside in documents, and they want those papers to reflect the truth.

My old high-school friend Neve Harp, salutatorian of the class of 1942 and fellow historical-society member, is one of the last of the original founding families. She is the granddaughter of the speculator and surveyor Frank Harp, who came with members of the Dakota and Great Northern Townsite Company to establish a chain of towns along the Great Northern tracks. They hoped to profit, of course. These townsites were meticulously drawn up into maps for risktakers who would purchase lots for their businesses or homes. Farmers in every direction would buy their supplies in town and patronize the entertainment spots when they came to ship their harvests via rail.

The platting crew moved by wagon and camped where they all agreed some natural feature of the landscape or general distance from other towns made a new town desirable. When the men reached the site of what is now our town, they'd already been platting and mapping for several years and in naming their sites had used up the few words they knew of Sioux or Chippewa, presidents and foreign capitals, important minerals, great statesmen, and the names of their girlfriends and wives. The Greek and Roman gods intrigued them. To the east lay the neatly marked out townsites of Zeus, Neptune, Apollo, and Athena. They rejected Venus as conducive, perhaps, to future debauchery. Frank Harp suggested Pluto, and it was accepted before anyone realized they'd named a town for the god of the underworld. This occurred in the boom year of 1906, twenty-

four years before the planet Pluto was discovered. It is not without irony now that the planet is the coldest, the loneliest, and perhaps the least hospitable in our solar system—but that was never, of course, intended to reflect upon our little municipality.

Dramas of great note have occurred in Pluto. In 1924, five members of a family—the parents, a teen-age girl, an eight- and a four-year-old boy—were murdered. A neighbor boy, apparently deranged with love over the daughter, vanished, and so remained the only suspect. Of that family, but one survived—a seven-month-old baby, who slept through the violence in a crib wedged unobtrusively behind a bed.

In 1934, the National Bank of Pluto was robbed of seventeen thousand dollars. In 1936, the president of the bank tried to flee the country with most of the town's money. He intended to travel to Brazil. His brother followed him as far as New York and persuaded him to return, and most of the money was restored. By visiting each customer personally, the brother convinced them all that their accounts were now safe, and the bank survived. The president, however, killed himself. The brother took over the job.

At the very apex of the town cemetery hill, there is a war memorial. In 1951, seventeen names were carved into a chunk of granite that was dedicated to the heroes of both world wars. One of the names was that of the boy who is generally believed to have murdered the family, the one who vanished from Pluto shortly after the bodies were discovered. He enlisted in Canada, and when notice of his death reached his aunt—who was married to a town-council member and had not wanted to move away, as the mother and father of the suspect did—the aunt insisted that his name be added to the list of the honorable dead. But unknown community members chipped it out of the stone, so that now a rough spot is all that marks his death, and on Veterans Day only sixteen flags are set into the ground around that rock.

There were droughts and freak accidents and other crimes of passion, and there were good things that happened, too. The seven-month-old baby who survived the murders was adopted by the aunt of the killer, who raised her in pam-

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Edited by **James R. Grossman,**
Ann Durkin Keating, and **Janice L. Reiff**

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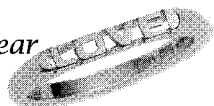
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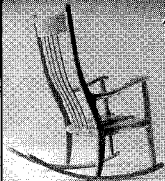
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pered love and, at great expense, sent her away to an Eastern college, never expecting that she would return. When she did, nine years later, she was a doctor—the first female doctor in the region. She set up her practice in town and restored the house she had inherited, where the murders had taken place—a small, charming clapboard farmhouse that sits on the eastern edge of town. Six hundred and forty acres of farmland stretch east from the house and barn. With the lease money from those acres, she was able to maintain a clinic and a nurse, and to keep her practice going even when her patients could not always pay for her services. She never married, but for a time she had a lover, a college professor and swim coach whose job did not permit him to leave the university. She had always understood that he would move to Pluto once he retired. But instead he married a girl much younger than himself and moved to Southern California, where he could have a year-round outdoor swimming pool.

Murdo Harp was the name of the brother of the suicide banker. He was the son of the town's surveyor and the father of my friend. Neve is now an octogenarian like me; she and I take daily walks to keep our joints oiled. Neve Harp was married three times, but has returned to her maiden name and the house she inherited from her father. She is a tall woman, somewhat stooped for lack of calcium in her diet, although on my advice she now ingests plenty. Every day, no matter what the weather (up to blizzard conditions), we take our two- or three-mile walk around the perimeter of Pluto.

"We orbit like an ancient couple of moons," she said to me one day.

"If there were people in Pluto, they could set their clocks by us," I answered. "Or worship us."

We laughed to think of ourselves as moon goddesses.

Most of the yards and lots are empty. For years, there has been no money in the town coffers for the streets, and the majority have been unimproved or left to gravel. Only the main street is paved with asphalt now, but the rough surfaces are fine with us. They give more purchase. Breaking a hip is our gravest dread—once you are immobile at our age, that is the end.

Our conversations slide through time, and we dwell often on setting straight the town record. I think we've sifted through every town occurrence by now, but perhaps when it comes to our own stories there is something left to know. Neve surprised me one day.

"I've been meaning to tell you why Murdo's brother, my uncle Octave, tried to run away to Brazil," she told me, as though the scandal had just occurred. "We should write the whole thing up for the historical newsletter."

I asked Neve to wait until we had finished our walk and sat down at the café, so that I could take notes, but she was so excited by the story beating its wings inside her—for some reason so alive and insistent that morning—that she had to talk as we made our way along. Her white hair swirled in wisps from its clip. Her features seemed to have sharpened. Neve has always been angular and imposing. I've been her foil. Her best audience. The one who absorbs the overflow of her excitements and pains.

"As you remember," Neve said, "Octave drowned himself when the river was at its lowest, in only two feet of water. He basically had to throw himself upon a puddle and breathe it in. It was thought that only a woman could have caused a man to inflict such a gruesome death upon himself, but it was not love. He did not die for love." Neve jabbed a finger at me, as though I'd been the one who kept the myth of Octave's passion alive. We walked meditatively on for about a hundred yards. Then she began again. "Do you remember stamp collections? How important those were? The rage?"

I said that I did remember. People still collect stamps, I told her.

"But not like they did then, not like Octave," she said. "My uncle had a stamp collection that he kept in the bank's main vault. One of this town's best-kept secrets is exactly how much money that collection was worth. When the bank was robbed in '34, the robbers forced their way into the vault. They grabbed what cash there was and completely ignored the fifty-nine albums and twenty-two specially constructed display boxes framed in ebony. That stamp collection was worth many times what the robbers got. It was worth almost as much money as was in the entire bank, in fact."

"What happened to it?" I was in-

trigued, as I hadn't known any of this.

Neve gave me a sly sideways look.

"I kept it when the bank changed hands. I like looking at the stamps, you see—they're better than television. I've decided to sell the whole thing, and that's why I'm telling the story now. The collection is in my front room. Stacked on a table. You've seen the albums, but you've never commented. You've never looked inside them. If you had, you would have been enchanted, like me, with the delicacy, the detail, and the endless variety. You would have wanted to know more about the stamps themselves, and the need to know and understand their histories would have taken hold of you, as it did my uncle and as it has me, though thankfully to a much lesser degree. Of course, you have your own interests."

"Yes," I said. "Thank God for those."

I would be typing out and editing Neve's story for the next month.

As we passed the church, we saw the priest there on his monthly visit. The poor man waved at us when we called out a greeting. No one had remembered, so he was cutting the grass. His parish was four or six combined now.

"They treat the good ones like simple beasts," Neve said. Then she shrugged and we pressed on. "My uncle's specialty, for all stamp collectors begin at some point to lean in a certain direction, was what you might call the dark side of stamp collecting."

I looked at Neve, whose excitements tend to take a shady turn, and thought that she had inherited her uncle's twist of mind along with his collection.

"After he had acquired the Holy Grails of philately—British Guiana's one-cent magenta, and the one-cent Z Grill—as well as the merely intriguing—for instance, Sweden's 1855 three-cent issue, which is orange instead of blue-green, and many stamps of the Thurn und Taxis postal system and superb specimens of the highly prized Mulready cover—my uncle's melancholia drew him specifically to what are called 'errors.' I think Sweden's three-cent began it all."

"Of course," I said, "even I know about the upside-down airplane stamp."

"The twenty-four-cent carmine-rose-and-blue invert. The Jenny. Yes!" She seemed delighted. "He began to collect errors in color, like the Swedish stamp, very tricky, then overprints, imperfor-

rate errors, value missings, omitted vignettes, and freaks. He has one entire album devoted to the seventeen-year-old boy Frank Baptist, who ran off stamps on an old handpress for the Confederate government."

Neve charged across a gravelly patch of road, and I hastened to stay within earshot. Stopping to catch her breath, she leaned on a tree and told me that, about six years before he absconded with the bank's money, Octave Harp had gone into disasters—that is, stamps and covers, or envelopes, that had survived the dreadful occurrences that test or destroy us. These pieces of mail, water-stained, tattered, even bloodied, marked by experience, took their value from the gravity of their condition. Such damage was part of their allure.

By then, we had arrived at the café, and I was glad to sit down and take a few notes on Neve's revelations. I borrowed some paper and a pen from the owner, and we ordered our coffee and sandwiches. I always have a Denver sandwich and Neve orders a B.L.T. without the bacon. She is a strict vegetarian, the only one in Pluto. We sipped our coffee.

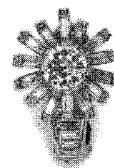
"I have a book," Neve said, "on philately, in which it says that stamp collecting offers refuge to the confused and gives new vigor to fallen spirits. I think Octave was hoping he would find something of the sort. But my father told me that the more he dwelt on the disasters the worse he felt. He would brighten whenever he obtained something valuable for his collection, though. He was in touch with people all over the globe—it was quite remarkable. I've got files and files of his correspondence with stamp dealers. He would spend years tracking down a surviving stamp or cover that had been through a particular disaster. Wars, of course, from the American Revolution to the Crimean War and the First World War. Soldiers frequently carry letters on their person, and one doesn't like to think how those letters ended up in the hands of collectors. But Octave preferred natural disasters and, to a lesser extent, man-made accidents." Neve tapped the side of her cup. "He would have been fascinated by the Hindenburg, and certainly there would have been a stamp or two involved, somewhere. And our modern disasters, too, of course."

I knew what she was thinking of,

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suddenly—those countless fluttering, strangely cheerful papers drifting through the sky in New York. . . . I went cold with dismay at the thought that many of those bits of paper were perhaps now in the hands of dealers who were selling them all over the world to people like Octave. Neve and I think very much alike, and I saw that she was about to sugar her coffee—a sign of distress. She has a bit of a blood-sugar problem.

"Don't," I said. "You'll be awake all night."

"I know." She did it anyway, then set the glass cannister back on the table. "Isn't it strange, though, how time mutes the horror of events, how they cease to affect us in the same way? But I began to tell you all of this in order to explain why Octave left for Brazil."

"With so much money. Now I'm starting to imagine he was on the trail of a stamp."

"You're exactly right," Neve said. "My father told me what Octave was looking for. As I said, he was fascinated with natural disasters, and in his collection he had a letter that had survived the explosion of Krakatoa in 1883, a Dutch postmark placed upon a letter written just before and carried off on a steamer. He had a letter from the sack of mail frozen onto the back of a New Hampshire mail carrier who died in the East Coast blizzard of 1888. An authenticated letter from the Titanic's seagoing post office, too, but then there must have been quite a lot of mail recovered for some reason, as he refers to other pieces. But he was not as interested in sea disasters. No, the prize he was after was a letter from the year 79 A.D."

I hadn't known there was mail service then, but Neve assured me that mail was extremely old, and that it was Herodotus whose words appeared in the motto "Neither snow, nor rain, nor gloom of night," etc., more than three hundred years before the date she'd just referred to—the year Mt. Vesuvius blew up and buried Pompeii in volcanic ash. "As you may know," she went on, "the site was looted and picked through by curiosity seekers for a century and a half after its rediscovery before anything was done about preservation. By then, quite a number of recovered objects had found their way into the hands of collectors. A letter that may have been meant for Pliny the

Younger, from the Elder, apparently surfaced for a tantalizing moment in Paris, but by the time Octave could contact the dealer the prize had been stolen. The dealer tracked it, however, through a shadowy resale into the hands of a Portuguese rubber baron's wife, who was living in Brazil, a woman with obsessions similar to Octave's—though she was not a stamp collector. She was interested in all things Pompeian—had her walls painted in exact replicas of Pompeii frescoes, and so on."

"Imagine that. In Brazil."

"No stranger than a small-town North Dakota banker amassing a world-class collection of stamps. Octave was, of course, a bachelor. And he lived very modestly, too. Still, he didn't have enough money to come near to purchasing the Pliny letter. He tried to leave the country with the bank's money and his stamp collection, but the stamps held him back. I think the customs officials became involved in questions regarding the collection—whether it should be allowed to leave the country, and so on. The Frank Baptist stamps were an interesting side note to American history, for instance. Murdo caught up with him a few days later, and Octave had had a breakdown and was paralyzed in some hotel room. He was terrified that his collection would be confiscated. When he returned to Pluto, he began drinking heavily, and from then on he was a wreck."

"And the Pompeii letter—what became of it?"

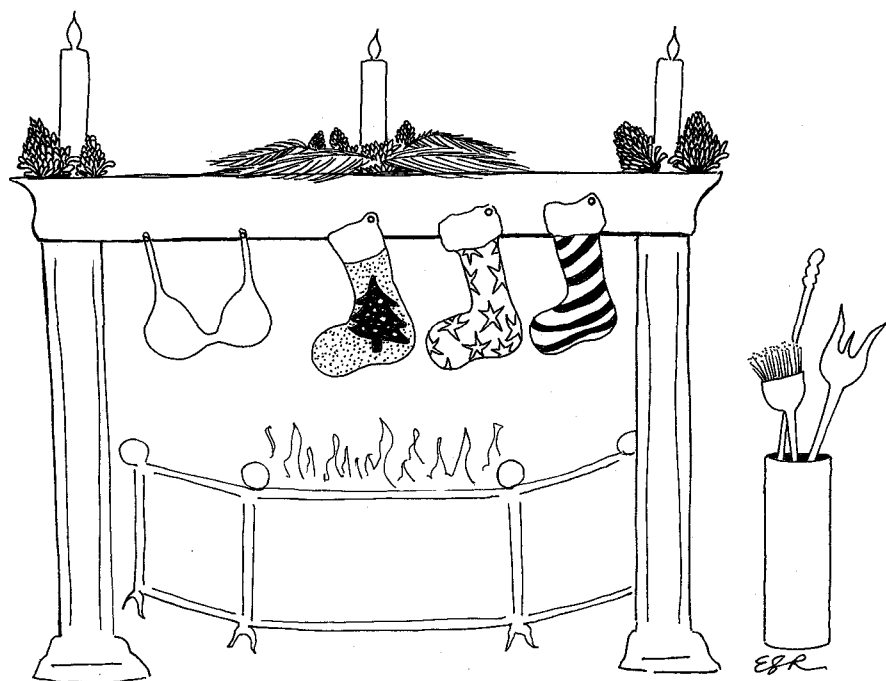
"There was a letter from the Brazilian lady, who still hoped to sell the piece to Octave, a wild letter full of cross-outs and stained with tears."

"A disaster letter?"

"Yes, I suppose you could say so. Her three-year-old son had somehow got hold of the Pompeii missive and reduced it to dust. So in a way it *was* a letter from a woman that broke Octave's heart."

There was nothing more to say, and we were both in a thoughtful mood by then. Our sandwiches were before us and we ate them.

Neve and I spend our evenings quietly, indoors, reading or watching television, listening to music, eating our meagre suppers alone. As I have been long accustomed to my own company, I



find my time from dusk to midnight wonderful. I am not lonely. I know I haven't long to enjoy the luxuries of privacy and silence, and I cherish my familiar surroundings. Neve, however, misses her two children and her grandchildren. She spends many evenings on the telephone, although they live in Fargo and she sees them often. Both Neve and I find it strange that we are old, and we are amazed at how quickly our lives passed—Neve with her marriages and I with my medical practice. We are even surprised when we catch sight of ourselves sometimes. I am fortunate in old age to have a good companion like Neve, though I have lately suspected that if she had the chance to leave Pluto she would do it.

That night, she had an episode of black moodiness, brought on by the sugar in her coffee, though I did not say so. She was still caught up in the telling of Octave's story, and she had also made an odd discovery.

Flanked by two bright reading lamps, I was quietly absorbing a rather too sweet novel sent by a book club that I belong to when the telephone rang. Speaking breathlessly, Neve told me that she had been looking through albums all evening with a magnifying glass. She had also been sifting through Octave's papers and letters. She had found something that distressed her: In a file that she had

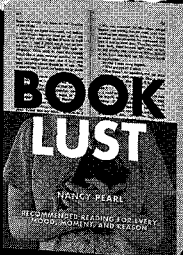
never before opened was a set of eight or nine letters, all addressed to the same person, with cancelled stamps, the paper distorted as though it had got wet, the writing smudged, each stamp differing from the others by some slight degree—a minor flaw in the cancellation mark, a slight rip. She had examined them in some puzzlement and noticed that one bore a fifty-cent violet Benjamin Franklin issued two years after the cancellation mark, which was dated just before the sinking of the Titanic.

"I am finding it very hard to admit the obvious," she said, "because I had formed such a sympathetic opinion of my uncle. But I believe he must have been experimenting with forged disaster mail, and that what I found was no less than evidence. He was offering his fake letter to a dealer in London. There were attempts and rejections of certification letters, too." She sounded furious, as though he had tried to sell her the item himself.

I tried to talk Neve down, but when she gets into a mood like this all of her rages and sorrows come back to her and it seems she must berate the world or mourn each one. From what she could tell, all the other articles in Octave's collection were authentic, so after a while she calmed herself. She even laughed a bit, wondering if Octave's forgery would hold up if included in the con-

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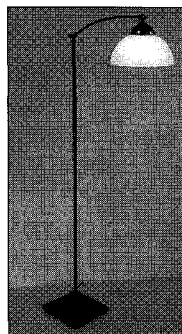
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"It could improve the price," she said.

As soon as possible, I put the phone down, and my insipid novel as well. Neve's moods are catching. I have a notion I will soon be alone in Pluto. I try to shake off a sudden miasma of turbulent dread, but before I know it I have walked into my bedroom and am opening the chest at the foot of my bed and I am looking through my family's clothes—all else was destroyed or taken away, but the undertaker washed and kept these (kindly, I think) and he gave them to me when I moved into this house. I find the sombre envelope marked "Jorghansen's Funeral Parlor" and slip from it the valentine, within its own envelope, that must have been hidden in a pocket. It may or may not be stained with blood, or rust, but it is most certainly a hideous thing, all schmaltz and paper lace. I note for the first time that the envelope bears a five-cent commemorative stamp of the Huguenot monument in Florida.

Sometimes I wonder if the sounds of fear and anguish, the thunder of the shotgun, is hidden from me somewhere in the most obscure corner of my brain. I might have died of dehydration, as I wasn't found for three days, but I don't remember that, either, not at all, and have never been abnormally afraid of thirst or obsessed with food or water. No, my childhood was very happy and I had everything—a swing, a puppy, dotting parents. Only good things happened to me. I was chosen Queen of the Prom. I never underwent a shock at the sudden revelation of my origins, for I was told the story early on and came to accept who I was. We even suspected that the actual killer might still be living somewhere in our area, invisible, remorseful. For we'd find small, carefully folded bills of cash hidden outdoors in places where my aunt or I would be certain to find them—beneath a flowerpot, in my tree house, in the hollow handles of my bicycle—and we'd always hold the wadded squares up and say, "He's been here again." But, truly, I am hard pressed to name more than the predictable sadnesses that pass through one's life. It is as though the freak of my survival charged my disposition with gratitude. Or as if my family absorbed all the misfortune that might have come

my way. I have lived an ordinary and a satisfying life, and I have been privileged to be of service to people. There is no one I mourn to the point of madness and nothing I would really do over again.

So why, when I stroke my sister's valentine against the side of my face, and why, when I touch the folded linen of her vest, and when I reach for my brothers' overalls and the apron my mother died in that day, and bundle these things to my stomach together with my father's ancient, laundered, hay-smelling clothes, why, when I gather my family into my arms, do I catch my breath at the wild upsurge, as if a wind had lifted me, a black wing of air? And why, when that happens, do I fly toward some blurred and ineradicable set of features that seems to rush away from me as stars do? At blinding speeds, never stopping?

When Pluto is empty at last and this house is reclaimed by earth, when the war memorial is toppled and the bank/café stripped for its brass and granite, when all that remains of our town is a collection of historical newsletters bound in volumes donated to the regional collections at the University of North Dakota, what then? What shall I have said? How shall I have depicted the truth?

The valentine tells me that the boy's name should not have been scratched from the war memorial, that he was not the killer after all. For my sister loved him in return, or she would not have carried his message upon her person. And if he had had her love he probably fled out of grief and despair, not remorse or fear of prosecution. But if it was not the boy, who was it? My father? But no, he was felled from behind. There is no one to accuse. Somewhere in this town or out in the world, then, the being has existed who stalked the boys hiding in the barn and destroyed them in the hay, who saw the beauty of my sister and my mother and shot them dead. And to what profit? For nothing was taken. Nothing gained. To what end the mysterious waste?

An extremely touchy case came my way about twenty years ago, and I have submerged the knowledge of its truth. I have never wanted to think of it. But now, as with Neve, my story knocks with insistence, and I remember my pa-

tient. He was a hired man who'd lived his life on a stock farm that abutted the farthest edges of our land. Warren Wolde was a taciturn crank, who nevertheless had a way with animals. He held a number of peculiar beliefs, I am told, regarding the United States government. On these topics, his opinion was avoided. Certain things were never mentioned around him—Congress being one, and particular amendments to the Constitution. Even if one stuck to safe subjects, he looked at people in a penetrating way that they found disquieting. But Warren Wolde was in no condition to disquiet me when I came onto the farm to treat him. Two weeks before, the farm's expensive blooded bull had hooked and then trampled him, concentrating most of the damage on one leg. He'd refused to see a doctor, and now a feverish infection had set in and the wound was necrotic. He was very strong, and fought being moved to a hospital so violently that his employers had decided to call me instead to see if I could save his leg.

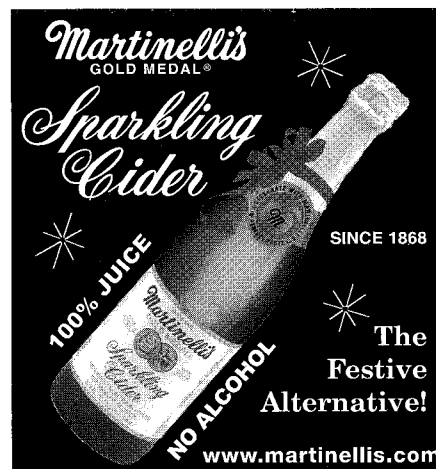
I could, and did, though the means were painful and awful and it meant twice-daily visits, which my schedule could ill afford. At each change of the dressing and debridement, I tried to dose Wolde with morphine, but he resisted. He did not trust me yet and feared that if he lost consciousness he'd wake without his leg. Gradually, I managed to heal the wound and also to quiet him. When I first came to treat him, he'd reacted to the sight of me with a horror unprecedented in my medical experience. It was a fear mixed with panic that had only gradually dulled to a silent wariness. As his leg healed, he opened to my visits, and by the time he was hobbling on crutches he seemed to anticipate my presence with an eager pleasure so tender and pathetic that it startled everyone around him. He'd shuck off his forbidding and strange persona just for me, they said, and sink back into an immobilizing fury once I'd left. He never healed quite enough to take on all of his old tasks, but he lasted pretty well at his job for another three years. He died naturally, in his sleep one night, of a thrown blood clot. To my surprise, I was contacted several weeks later by a lawyer.

The man said that his client Warren Wolde had left a package for me, which I asked him to send in the mail.

When the package arrived, addressed in an awkward script that certainly could have been Wolde's, I opened the box immediately. Inside were hundreds upon hundreds of wadded bills of assorted denominations, and of course I recognized their folded pattern as identical to the bills that had turned up for me all through my childhood. I could perhaps believe that the money gifts and the legacy were only marks of sympathy for the tragic star of my past and, later, gratitude for what I'd done. I might be inclined to think that, were it not for the first few times I had come to treat Wolde, when he reared from me in a horror that seemed so personal. There had been something of a recalled nightmare in his face, I'd thought it even then, and I was not touched later on by the remarkable change in his character. On the contrary, it chilled me to sickness.

Those of you who have faithfully subscribed to this newsletter know that our dwindling subscription list has made it necessary to reduce the length of our articles. So I must end here. But it appears, anyway, that since only the society's treasurer, Neve Harp, and I have convened to make any decisions at all regarding the preservation and upkeep of our little collection, and as only the two of us are left to contribute more material to this record, and as we have nothing left to say, our membership is now closed. We declare our society defunct. I shall, at least, keep walking the perimeter of Pluto until my footsteps wear my orbit into the earth. My last act as the president of Pluto's historical society is this: I would like to declare a town holiday to commemorate the year I saved the life of my family's murderer. The wind will blow. The devils rise. All who celebrate it shall be ghosts. And there will be nothing but eternal dancing, dust on dust, everywhere you look.

Oh my, too apocalyptic, I think as I leave my house to walk over to Neve's to help her cope with her sleepless night. She will soon move to Fargo. She'll have the money to do it. Dust on dust! There are very few towns where old women can go out at night and enjoy the breeze, so there is that about Pluto. I take my cane to feel the way, for the air is so black I think already I am invisible. ♦



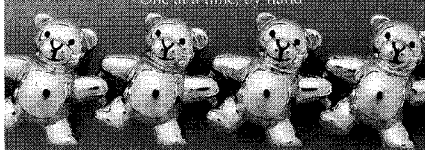
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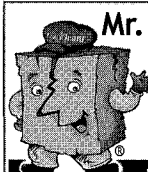
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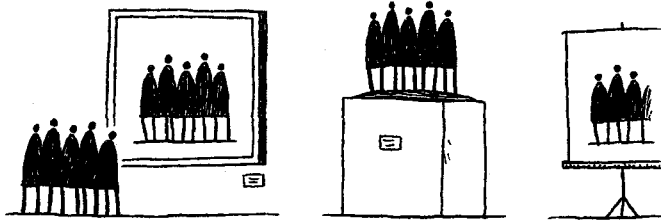
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HOLY SMOKE

What were the Crusades really about?

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

In its original meaning, a crusade was a Christian holy war, and in that sense it was a contradiction in terms. Christ's whole teaching was to love thy neighbor, not kill him. But, like everyone else, the early Christians had enemies, whom they needed to fight on occasion. So the Church fathers went to work on the doctrine, and by the eleventh century it was agreed that in certain circumstances God might not only condone war but demand it. Of course, there had to be an important cause. The Church claimed that it had such a cause: Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of infidels. Actually, that had happened more than four hundred years earlier, and in the ensuing period Christians were generally treated far better in the holy city than non-Christians were in Europe. But there was another call to arms: Alexius I Comnenus, the emperor of Byzantium—that is, of Catholic Europe's Eastern brother—had asked the Pope for help against Muslim forces threatening his borders. Again, however, this was something less than an emergency. Byzantium and Islam did fight, but no more frequently than most neighboring powers of the time.

According to many modern historians, what triggered the Crusades was not an external cause but an internal one: a campaign, beginning with Pope Gregory VII, in the late eleventh century, to reform the Church. This was a two-pronged effort. One goal was to stamp out immorality: get the priests to stop marrying, stop selling ecclesiastical offices, live by their vows. A second, and

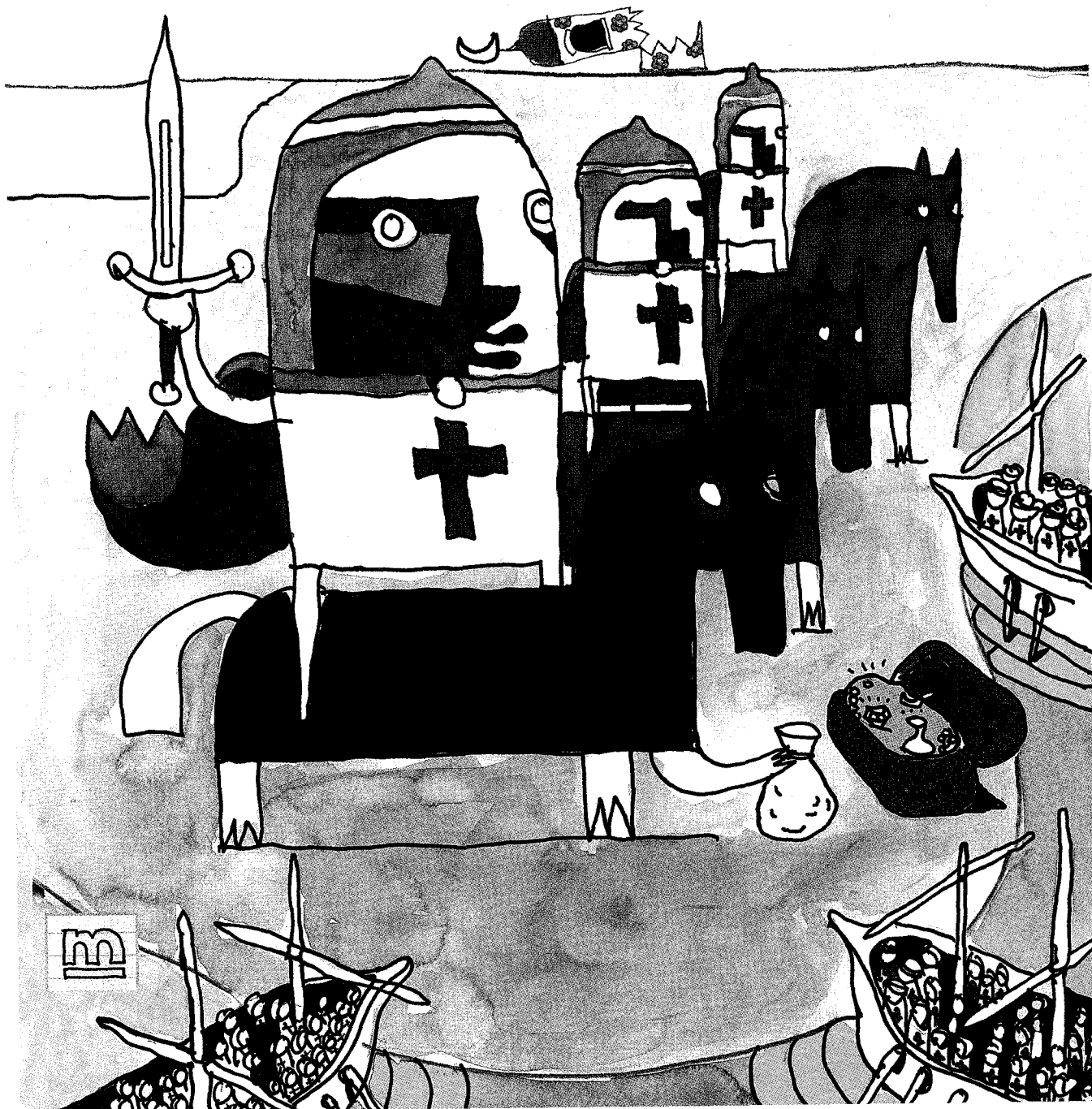
probably more important, objective was to strengthen the Papacy. In religion as in politics, Europeans of that period had little respect for centralized authority. The Pope's sovereignty was disputed not just by secular rulers but within the Church. When Urban II, Gregory's successor, was elected, in 1088, it took him six years to get a rival, German candidate out of the Lateran Palace. (He finally had to bribe him.) This is not to speak of the fact that the Pope had no control over the Eastern churches, the dioceses of the Balkan peninsula, Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine. Most of these territories were under the jurisdiction of the Byzantine Empire and hence of the Greek Orthodox Church, which, to Rome's abiding fury, had broken with the Western Church in 1054. The Vatican wanted to get mightier and holier, and Urban II took on the job.

In 1095, he went on a tour of France, and one afternoon in Clermont he gave a sermon calling on Christians to journey to the East and reclaim the Holy Land. "A race absolutely alien to God," he said, was defiling Christian altars, raping Christian women, tying Christian men to posts and using them for archery practice. None of this was true, but it had the desired effect. First, as the postcolonial theorists would say, it "otherized" the Muslims. Second, it gave the European nobles a cause that could distract them from warring with their neighbors—a more or less daily occupation of knights in that period—and unite them, for a holy purpose. In the

months that followed, at convocations across Europe, between sixty thousand and a hundred thousand people came forward and knelt to "take the Cross."

Thus was launched the crusading movement, whose high tide lasted for two centuries. As time went on, a "crusade" no longer meant just a march against the Muslim infidel. Any perceived enemy of the Church—the Wends, in Germany (pagans); the Cathars, in southern France (heretics)—could be the target of a crusade. But the Crusades against Islam were the model, and the two most interesting were the first (1095-99) and the fourth (1202-04). The First Crusade is important because, apart from being first, it was successful, at least in the Church's terms: the men recruited by Urban did capture Jerusalem, together with other rich territories in the East, and in consequence—because those lands had to be defended—they made the later Crusades to the East necessary. The Fourth Crusade is famous for the opposite reason. In Christian terms, it was the least successful—indeed, a scandal. The Crusaders never got to Jerusalem; instead, they attacked Christian cities, notably Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, which they effectively destroyed. They thus shifted the center of Christian civilization from East to West, and permanently altered the history of the world. These two expeditions are the subject of a pair of recent books, "The First Crusade: A New History" (Oxford; \$35), by Thomas Asbridge, and "The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople" (Viking; \$25.95), by Jonathan Phillips. Both authors are young lecturers in medieval history at the University of London, both have written previous books on the Crusades, and they think alike.

To the nineteenth century, the Crusades, like most things medieval, were exotic, heroic, and spiritually fine. In Walter Scott's "The Talisman," in Verdi's "I Lombardi," brave knights, their standards whipping in the wind, ride off to save Christendom from godless people with scimitars. The popularity of the subject was tied to the movements for national unity that dominated the period. On the surface of "I Lombardi," medieval Lombards are fighting the Saracens; beneath the surface, nineteenth-



Two new books join a recent trend that suggests that historians have misinterpreted the Crusades for fifty years.

century Lombards are fighting the Austrians, and Verdi is rooting for them. The theme survived well into the twentieth century. Lloyd George, when he published the speeches he gave during the First World War, called the book "The Great Crusade"; Eisenhower's memoir of the Second World War was entitled "Crusade in Europe." Whenever a war needed to be viewed as a sacred enterprise, the word came up. Shortly after September 11, 2001, George W. Bush used it to describe his war on terrorism.

Unlike his predecessors, however, President Bush was quickly warned off

that term, which had negative associations for Muslims and, by this time, for others as well. Between Ike's war and Bush's, the notion of ideological warfare fell into bad odor with intellectuals. The most important influence here, aside from the Cold War, was the great English medievalist Steven Runciman, whose three-volume "History of the Crusades" was published between 1951 and 1954 and achieved wide popularity. Far from regarding the crusading movement as a noble endeavor, Runciman described it as "a vast fiasco," whose main result was simply to create an undying

enmity between Islamic and Christian peoples. Faith may have inspired the Crusaders, but not for long, Runciman said: "High ideals were besmirched by cruelty and greed, enterprise and endurance by a blind and narrow self-righteousness; and the Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God." That sentence is now fifty years old, but the opinion is still widely held. John Julius Norwich, in his 1995 "Byzantium: The Decline and Fall," calls the crusading movement "one of the blackest chapters in the history of Christendom" and says

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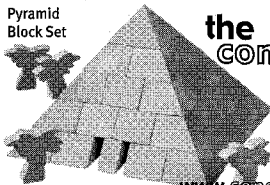
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that the Fourth Crusade, at least, was basically about loot.

The trend is reversing again, however. Many of today's young historians in Britain and America are tired of the economic—and therefore iconoclastic—analyses that were so popular with their professors and, perhaps not unaffected by the spectacle of people in the Middle East blowing themselves up for Allah, are returning to the study of ideology as the wheel of history. That, in any case, is what one gathers from recent writings on the Crusades. As Jonathan Riley-Smith, another expert on the movement, sees it, the disasters of twentieth-century history so poisoned ideological warfare in the minds of historians that they could not imagine its being waged even by people who lived eight centuries earlier. They had to believe that the Crusaders were after property, pillage. They could not understand, though the evidence was there, "how intellectually respectable the Christian theory of positive violence was" to the medieval mind. Positive violence—what is that? Just what it says: the idea that killing is virtuous. According to Riley-Smith, a number of historians now accept this belief as key to the Crusades.

Asbridge and Phillips are of that party. Both are writing for the general public, and in their view there are two facts about the Middle Ages that non-specialist readers must get into their heads. The first is that violence was a normal fact of medieval life. Seizing your brother-in-law's castle, cutting off his nose—these were unremarkable activities. The second is the pervasive religiosity of the period—above all, the fear of damnation, especially on the part of the knights. They were usually the ones committing the violence. Yet every sermon they heard told them that killing was an abomination to God; every church portal they gazed up at showed grinning devils hauling the violent down to Hell. So they were caught in a vise: the thing they were trained to do was also a thing that was going to cause them to burn for all eternity. They tried to stave this off. They went on pilgrimages; they made donations to monasteries. (The rise of the monastic orders in the Middle Ages owes much to knightly guilt.) Still, they knew they were living in a state of sin.

Then Urban, in preaching the First Crusade, offered them a solution. He called upon them to kill, and told them that on this occasion it was not a sin—indeed, that it would win them remission of past sins. By the Fourth Crusade, participants were guaranteed absolution of all confessed transgressions—in other words, a ticket straight to paradise. The arrangement that Urban offered to the men of the First Crusade is less clear, but they were promised "eternal rewards." So it was two in one: the knights could go on slaughtering people and get to Heaven thereby. That was "positive violence," and, according to Asbridge and Phillips, it was the motor of the Crusades.

Asbridge, in his account of the First Crusade, reminds us of this point continually. But it is just his bass line, not his theme. His theme—unavoidable, in the history of that expedition—is disunity. The First Crusade had no single commander. Basically, the army was made up of four contingents: the northern French, the southern French, the Germans and Lotharingians, and the southern-Italian Normans—all of them, despite their varying origins, called "Franks" by early and late historians of the Crusades. Each group had a different leader and spoke a different language; some hated others, by reason of past conflict. Add to this another contingent, the so-called People's Crusade, a rabble got up—independently of Urban, and probably to his dismay—by a charismatic French monk, Peter the Hermit, and, in the words of one chronicler, including as many "adulterers, murderers, thieves, perjurers" as it did pious folk. All the divisions travelled separately to the East. The People's Crusade departed first, crossing Europe on foot and, figuring that the rout of infidels might as well begin at home, slaughtering a large portion of the Rhineland Jews as they passed through that territory. They were the first to reach Constantinople, where Emperor Alexius I took one look at them and shipped them across the Bosphorus, into Asia Minor. Probably to the relief of their allies as well as their enemies, they were soon wiped out, almost to a man, by the Turks.

Then the official Crusade reached Constantinople, and began its dealings

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with Alexius, who must be counted as another competing leader of the expedition. He regarded the Crusaders as his tool—Urban had told him that they were coming to defend his territories—so, after loading them down with gifts, he extracted promises from the leading knights that they would turn over to him any captured territory that had once been part of the Roman Empire, of which, in his view, Byzantium was the continuation. The knights departed and shortly began betraying their vows to Alexius, as he began violating his promise to send them supplies and reinforcements. They captured the important Turkish city of Nicaea (which they did turn over to Alexius). Then they began the gruelling march across Asia Minor. When it was over, half the Crusade's men, and more than half of its horses, were dead. Whatever their commitment to "positive violence," the survivors seem to have decided that if they were going to suffer this they should get some material reward. At every subsequent engagement, there were ferocious disputes over booty. The Crusaders spilled each other's blood, shook hands in the morning, and then took out their grievances on the towns that lay in their path.

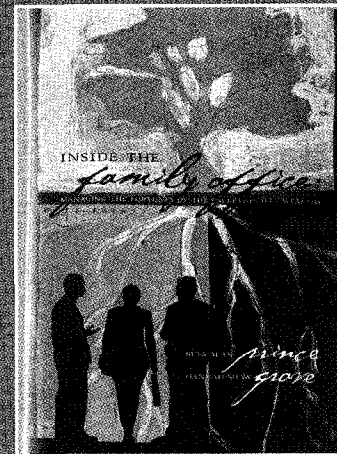
Chief among these was Antioch, a great trading city. In order to conquer Jerusalem, the Franks had to take Antioch first, to cover their backs, but the city was well supplied and had seemingly impregnable walls. The siege of Antioch lasted more than seven months, during which period many men deserted and many others died of hunger. By the time it was over, the Crusaders were in no mood for mercy. They killed almost everyone, including the resident Christians. And now the quarrels over who would get what escalated. Jerusalem was three days' march down the road, but it took the Crusaders half a year to set out on that journey, because two rival knights were fighting over control of Antioch, and neither would leave the city in the other's hands. Finally, a large contingent left for Jerusalem. Outside the city, they tarried for another month, building war machines and arguing again over the division of the anticipated spoils. Then they attacked. According to contemporary accounts, they left not one Muslim alive. The city's Jews took refuge in their temple; the Franks barricaded the exits

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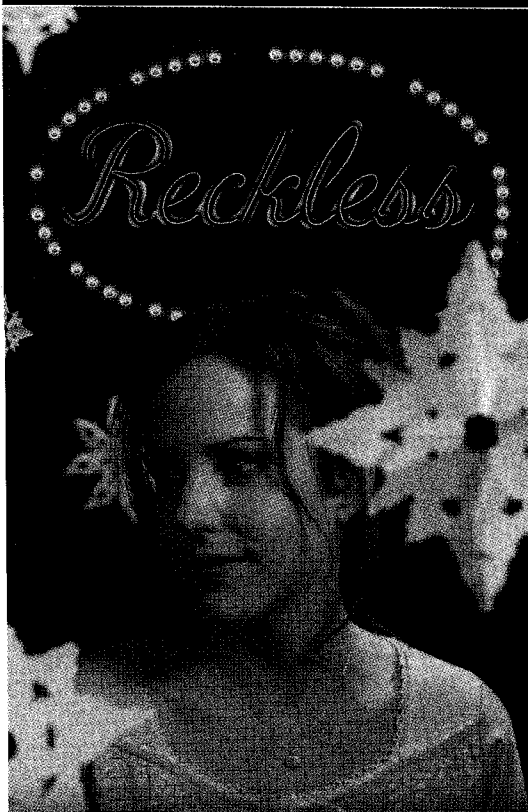


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and set the building on fire. At the end of the sack, Asbridge writes, the Crusaders "came, still covered in their enemies' blood, weighed down with booty, 're-joicing and weeping with excessive gladness to worship at the Sepulchre of our Savior Jesus.'" (He is quoting an eyewitness.) They had fulfilled their vow.

The story is not just brutal; it is thick with ironies. By the time the Crusaders got to Jerusalem, the Seljuk Turks, their primary enemy, had lost the city to the Egyptian Fatimids, who were in diplomatic negotiations with the Crusaders. So the people from whom the Crusaders took the city were not their foes but their hoped-for friends. Pope Urban II never heard of the victory; he died two weeks after it occurred. Most of the wealth that the soldiers had acquired was spent on their return passage; many arrived home penniless. The Eastern Christian sects—the Armenians and Copts and others whose freedom to worship in the city was one of the Crusade's foremost stated goals—were expelled from Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the Franks had established the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, which, despite various losses (notably the city of Jerusalem), did not fall for two hundred years.

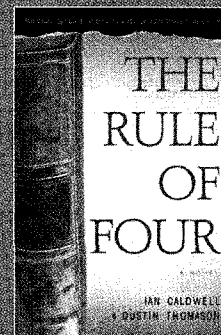
Asbridge, in keeping with his aim to produce a popular history, writes with maximum vividness. Some of this gets a little hokey—there are cliff-hangers galore—but I am grateful that he stooped to entertain us. Mad Hugh and Basil the Bulgar-Slayer were fun to read about. Raymond of Toulouse, one of the leading knights, was reputed to have had an eye plucked out in an earlier conflict, and to have carried this shrivelled organ in his pocket afterward, "as testament to his suffering." Asbridge says that there's no good evidence for this story, but he includes it anyway. As long as we're on the gallows, he'll give us some gallows humor. There is also a note of comedy in the competition among the knights, with their nasty little treacheries, and with the lesser soldiers running back and forth between tents to figure out who's on top—and therefore whom they should ally themselves with—today.

Asbridge tries to put everything in concrete, practical terms. In particular, he takes pains to explain the actual warfare, which in those days had everything to do with walls. Walls—huge, thick

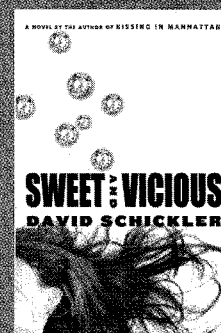
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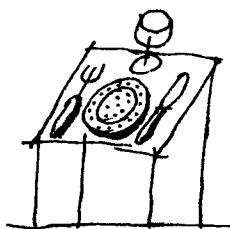


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walls—were how a city protected itself, and they were what the besiegers had to breach. The Franks had ingenious machines—the petraria, the mangonella—for catapulting rocks over the battlements. And, when the townspeople retaliated by pouring burning grease and pitch down on the attackers, there were other machines—the vulpus, the testudo—to protect them. Walls were also the stage of medieval warfare's psychological theatre. The Muslims hung the Christian dead from the top of the walls and left them there, so that their friends could watch them rot. In turn, the Christians, when they beheaded their prisoners, did so in front of the walls, so that the enemy could get a good look. Then they lobbed the heads over the battlements. In the face of such tactics, Asbridge has to work hard to remind us of the holy principles underlying the Crusade.

Asbridge's problem is small, however, compared with that of Jonathan Phillips, in his book on the Fourth Crusade. As appalling as the First Crusade was, the fourth was far worse. The goal, again, was to recapture Jerusalem, which had been seized by the Turks in 1187. This time, the leaders of the expedition decided that everyone must go together, by sea. In 1201, a delegation was sent to Europe's mightiest seafaring power, Venice, which was ruled at that time by a bold, crafty man, Doge Enrico Dandolo, who, though he was blind and probably over ninety years old, was to become the chief policy-maker of the Fourth Crusade. The delegates told Dandolo what they needed: enough ships to transport thirty-three thousand five hundred soldiers and their horses, enough men (it turned out to be thirty thousand, the equivalent of half the adult population of Venice) to rig and sail the ships, and enough food to get everyone through the journey. This was a tall order, and the Doge asked a great price—eighty-five thousand marks. (According to Phillips, that was twice the annual income of the kings of France and England.) The Franks swallowed hard and signed the contract, and the Venetians spent more than a year preparing the fleet. Then, as agreed, the



Crusaders mustered at Venice, but instead of the thirty-three thousand five hundred men who were expected—and absolutely needed, for the Doge's price was to be met by each of the men paying his own portion—only a third of that number showed up. True to form, the European knights didn't like taking orders. Some preferred to sail, with their forces, from Marseilles or Genoa. Of those who had come to Venice, the rich dug into their pockets, but still they could come up with only a little more than half of what they owed.

What could they do now? To turn back would be a betrayal of their vow, and of their knightly honor. But what could the Doge do? He thought about it, and he came up with an idea. On the Dalmatian coast there was a city, Zara—a rich city, with excellent oak for shipbuilding—that had recently thrown off Venetian control and gone over to the King of Hungary. If the Crusade would agree to besiege Zara and restore it to Venetian rule, the Doge would postpone (not forgive—he drove a hard bargain) payment of the Franks' debt. For the Franks, this was a shocking proposal. Their mission was to make war on infidels. Zara was a Christian city, and under the spiritual rule not of the Greek Orthodox Church but of the Pope in Rome. Furthermore, the King of Hungary had taken the Cross, which meant that his property was under the protection of the Vatican and could not be legitimately attacked by anyone. That was part of the deal offered by the Church to any Crusader.

Nevertheless, the Franks accepted the Doge's proposal. The Pope soon got wind of their plans, and as they were camped outside Zara they received a letter from him forbidding them to lay a hand on the city and promising excommunication to anyone who did. At this point, a bitter quarrel broke out among the knights, and a few defected, with their men. (Indeed, as the fleet left Venice for Zara, the putative leader of the Crusade, Boniface of Montferrat, found that he had urgent business to attend to back home in Piedmont. He rejoined the forces at Zara, but only after the city had been taken.) A core group of influential knights decided to go ahead, and make it up to the Pope

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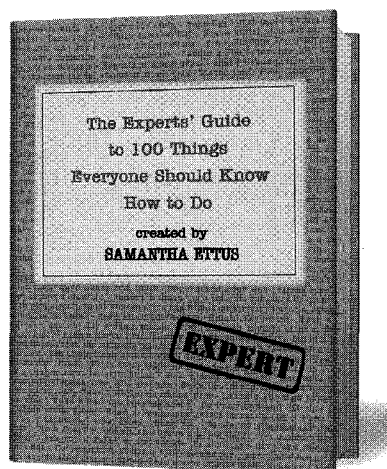
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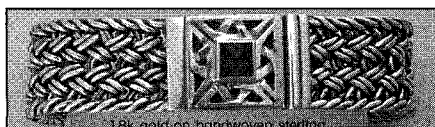
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Sonny said, *Then he shouldn't have given Molly the two more babies.*
Dave's sister and her husband adopted the baby, and that was Babe.
You can't live in the past.
Sure he was a tough guy but he was no hero.
Sonny and Toots went to live for a while with the Braegers.
It was a time when it seemed like everybody had a nickname.
Nobody can live in the future.
When Rose died having Babe, Dave came after the doctor with a gun.
Toots said, *What would you expect, he was a young man and there she was.*
Sonny still a kid himself when Dave moved out on Molly.
The family gave him Rose's cousin Molly to marry so she could raise the children.
There's no way to just live in the present.
In their eighties Toots and Sonny still arguing about their father.
Dave living above the bar with Della and half the family.

—Robert Pinsky

later. They did not share the contents of the Pontiff's letter with the common soldiers; they just led them to the walls of Zara and conquered the city in short order. The Pope then fired off a new letter, excommunicating them all.

News of their difficulty spread quickly to the courts of Europe, and reached Alexius Angelos, the crown prince of Constantinople, who at that time was living in exile in the West. Seven years earlier, Alexius's father, Isaac II, the rightful emperor of Byzantium, had been deposed by his (Isaac's) brother, now Alexius III, who threw him into a dungeon and had his eyes gouged out. Prince Alexius had been trying for years to induce some European power to help him reclaim his inheritance. Now, like Dandolo, he saw in the Fourth Crusade's troubles an opportunity for himself, and he sent a delegation to the Crusaders at Zara. Since the Crusade was pledged to the service of God and justice, the delegates said, its duty, clearly, was to make a detour to Constantinople and expel the usurper. If they did so, furthermore, Prince Alexius would pay them two hundred thousand silver marks, provision the entire army, provide ten thousand men to go with them to Egypt (this was another of their planned side trips), and, for as long as he lived, protect Frankish possessions in the East. Finally, he would place the Greek Orthodox Church under the rule of Rome. The last item was crucial, the very thing the Crusaders needed. If

they could return proud, schismatic Byzantium to Roman control, this would quickly solve their problems with the Pope. Also, the promised two hundred thousand marks would more than pay their debt to Dandolo. The Doge, who was with them, favored the plan for other reasons as well. Byzantium had threatened Venetian trade routes; if it had a ruler who owed his throne to Venice, this would be good for business. So the offer was accepted. Alexius, who now arrived in person, was taken on board, and the Crusaders, with stops at various Byzantine ports to demand the people's allegiance and make off with their food supplies, proceeded to Constantinople.

Byzantium at that time was the greatest civilization in Christendom. In 395, the Roman Empire had been divided in two. The Western half—that is, Europe—soon fell to the barbarians, while the Eastern half survived, as the inheritor of the empire and the repository of its culture. Constantinople, its capital, was ten times larger than any city in Western Europe. Situated on the Bosphorus, smack in the middle of the trade route between the West and the Orient, it was also far richer than any European city. It had palaces of gold and marble; its basilica, Hagia Sophia, dwarfed any European cathedral and, together with the city's other churches, housed priceless relics—the Virgin Mary's robe, the Crown of Thorns, two heads of John the Baptist. The city was sophisticated, cosmopolitan,

with luxurious habits. Its ladies, watched over by twenty thousand eunuchs, wore silks and jewels and white wigs. The Constantinopolitans—or Greeks, as they were known—regarded the Europeans as grunting tribesmen. The Franks, in turn, viewed the Greeks as pantywaists, and probably enjoyed the thought of having to rescue them. Arriving in June of 1203, they attacked quickly and in one day put Alexius III to flight. Isaac was brought up from his dungeon and restored to power.

Then a delegation from the Crusade went to Isaac, enthroned among his nobles, and informed him of the bargain that his son had made to achieve this result. (Apparently, the agreement included Prince Alexius's being made co-emperor, Alexius IV, for that happened soon afterward.) The court was not happy, nor, after twenty years of political unrest, was it in a position to meet the terms. But it had no choice. Oppressive taxes were levied on the people; the silver lamps of Hagia Sophia were taken down and melted into coin. As this went on, the Constantinopolitans came to hate the Franks, and, as the payments started to come late, and then stopped coming at all, the Franks hated them back. Finally, the Franks threatened war. In response, a flotilla of "fire ships"—flaming vessels—was sent out one night from the port of Constantinople to destroy the Venetian ships. (It failed.) Soon afterward, Isaac and Alexius IV were deposed by a Constantinopolitan nobleman determined to get rid of the Franks. Isaac died of grief, probably with some assistance; Alexius was murdered. With the latter gone, the Franks knew that they would never be paid, and they decided to take the city instead. They did so in two days.

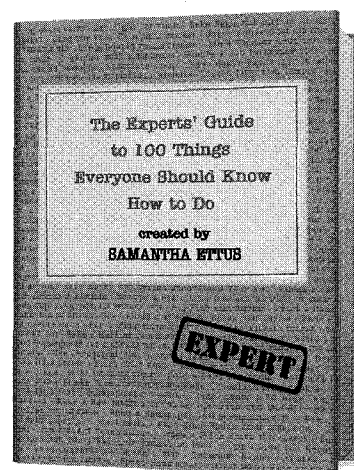
Even amid the other horrid events of the Crusades, the sack of Constantinople is notorious. Not only did the Crusaders rape and massacre; they made a party of it. They hatted out their horses in the white wigs of the Constantinopolitan ladies. A prostitute straddled the Patriarch's throne in Hagia Sophia and sang songs. The Franks gathered up booty wholesale; what they couldn't carry, they destroyed. The Venetians, who had better taste—and who, in keeping with their still unpaid debt, were allowed two-thirds of the spoils—quietly crated up the city's finest treasures. As a result, St. Mark's

basilica, in Venice, houses one of the world's foremost collections of Byzantine art, including the four golden horses that once stood in Constantinople's hippodrome and were now installed over St. Mark's main portal. As for the territories, Dandolo shrewdly took what he knew Venice could defend: Crete, Corfu, the ports in the Peloponnese. The huge power of the Venetian republic during the Renaissance owed much to those acquisitions. The Franks took the interior, which they then spent years fighting over with outraged locals and, as usual, with each other. Baldwin of Flanders, one of the Crusade's leaders, was made emperor of Byzantium. He was captured and killed by the King of Bulgaria within a year. Nor did the Frankish rule of Byzantium last long. The Greeks retook Constantinople a half-century later, in 1261; in 1453, the city, or what was left of it, fell to the Turks, who occupy it still. So a great, ancient civilization was destroyed, in the name of God.

Phillips, even more than Asbridge, is determined to put this story over to the general public. He is not just vivid; he basically storyboards the Crusade, beginning with an elaborate flash-forward to the rugged Baldwin being crowned in Hagia Sophia. (Baldwin changes his woollen hose for stockings of red samite. He receives in his calloused hands a ruby the size of an apple. He thinks of his wife, a denizen of "cold, marshy" Flanders, whom he must now summon to be the empress of Byzantium.) And that's just the prologue. These scenes are exciting, but Phillips's most substantial achievement is his analysis of the Realpolitik of the Fourth Crusade, his effort to show these knights not as greedy cynics, which is what Steven Runciman called them, but as men impelled by many conflicting motives, among which, like Asbridge, he places religion very high. At some points, he has trouble with this argument. For example, in the matter of the knights' worries about Zara, he writes that damnation was "the greatest possible concern to all medieval people." Clearly not, however, for the knights ignored the Pope's threat of excommunication—that is, damnation—and attacked Zara anyway. It gets a little confusing. Nevertheless, that is often what people's decisions are like when their backs are to the wall, and one has to admire Phil-

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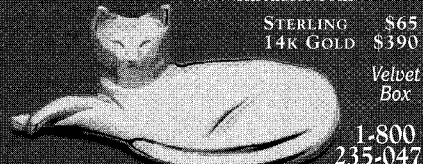
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lips for trying to juggle so many causes.

We are left with one question about these two books. The insistence on the Crusaders' sense of religious duty, as opposed to bloodlust and greed, comes across as a justification. However much the authors may historicize it, it starts to sound virtuous. Does this mean that Asbridge and Phillips think the Crusades were O.K.? Not according to many of their statements, particularly about the sack of Jerusalem and of Constantinople. But before those events, as the Franks are lobbing the stones and mounting the battlements, our chroniclers are full of admiration for them. Asbridge praises the "inspired and audacious" tactics of the leaders of the First Crusade, their "military genius"; Phillips roots for the men of the Fourth Crusade as, with their boats swaying beneath them and with scores of Greek bowmen firing at them, they climb their ladders and jump out onto the walls of Constantinople. Later, the authors bemoan the slaughter, but what did they think the audacious tactics were for? There is a curious amorality here. It may be endemic to military history. (What an exciting battle! Oops, what a lot of dead people!) Still, it is strange.

And it is even stranger in relation to current events. Asbridge never mentions the war in Iraq. Phillips gives Al Qaeda a few sentences in his introduction. But these two books are aimed at the common reader, and the authors know very well that their customers will be thinking about what is now happening in the Middle East. (Or Asbridge knows it. In the American edition of his book, a new subtitle has been added: "The Roots of Conflict Between Christianity and Islam.") And if I have noticed certain resemblances between the Crusades and the war in Iraq—the exaggeration of the threat, to get the war going; the enormous financial cost to the attacking country; the mixture of idealistic and commercial motives; the surprise of finding that the liberated may not thank you, indeed, may attack you—Asbridge and Phillips have surely also noted the parallels. They are silent on the subject, but in the resulting void, and with the constant emphasis on the religious motive, there is a strong suggestion, intentional or not, that we should consider whether today, too, there might be such a thing as positive violence. ♦

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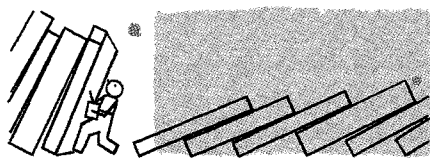
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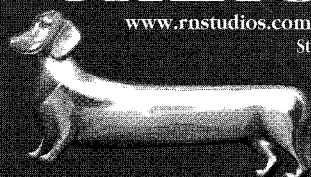
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POP MUSIC

A CLEAR VIEW

In English, yet.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

In November, EMI Music held a listening party in Paris to celebrate the French release of "Nolita," the new album by the Israeli-Dutch singer and songwriter Keren Ann, who is thirty. (The album will be released here in March.) Before leaving for the party, Keren Ann showed me her sixth-floor flat, in Montmartre. It is a small, bisected space that she uses for making music, sleeping, and smoking. A pile of magazines covers the unused gas stove and digital recording equipment fills the tiny living room. Keren Ann recorded most of "Nolita" in this apartment; the rest was done in Nolita itself, in a studio space that she rents on lower Broadway.

"In New York, you pay for the neighborhood," she said. "In Paris, you pay for the view."

The view from her window could have served as the opening scene of a light romantic comedy: the tin roofs of Montmartre gone blue in reflected moonlight; the twinkling Eiffel Tower, topped by a revolving searchlight. If Audrey Tautou wasn't lurking adorably around a corner, it is hard to imagine where she was.

Keren Ann's music is like that view: a cliché stood up straight and done so well that you remember why it became a cliché. Every college student who feels a little sad and sits down with an acoustic guitar to summon beauty and form hopes, whether or not she knows it, to come up with one of Keren Ann's songs. This, unfortunately, is not what usually happens. Right now, at a café somewhere, a guitar player is pouring out his acoustic vision in front of helpless diners who, bereft of legal protection, are silently praying for the robots to take over. Keren Ann doesn't make you wish for these things.

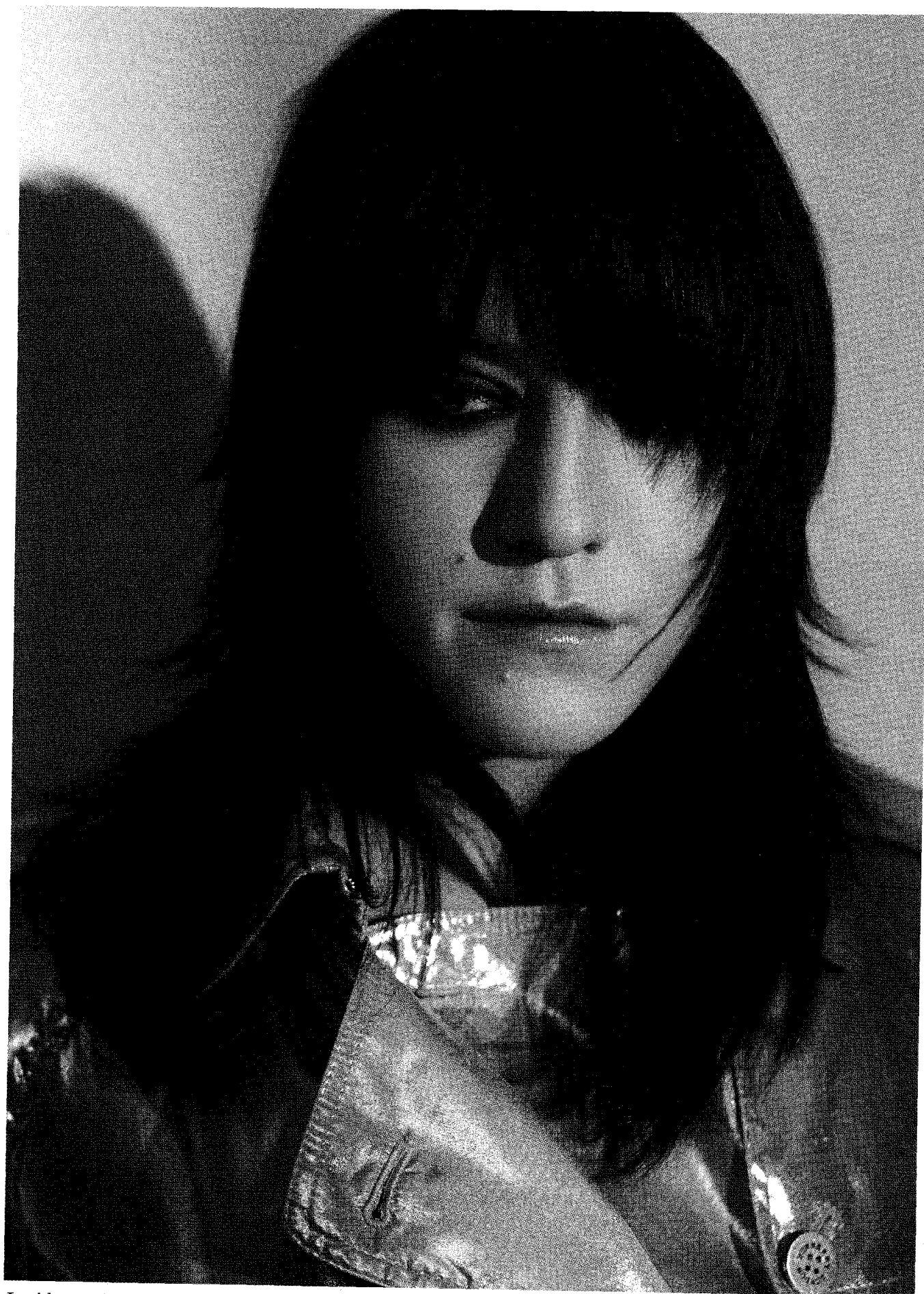
Last summer, Keren Ann played a series of dates in New York to support her luminous third album, "Not Going Anywhere," which was released here in

August. Its aims are modest and it stakes out well-known ground, but it is the album I listened to more than any other in 2004. I reached for it over and over, as if it were a glass of water. (Her first two CDs, both sung in French, were released only in France.)

Originally recorded for Keren Ann's own amusement, "Not Going Anywhere" was not intended for release, in France or anywhere else. After changing her mind and releasing it on Capitol in France, Keren Ann made the contractually obligated rounds in the United States, to allow the American labels in the EMI family the right of first refusal. To her surprise, Blue Note decided to release the album. It shouldn't have been surprising. "Not Going Anywhere" is well and truly *written*—a generosity at a time when technology makes it easy to release an album that is more wish than act. Every change and sound on "Not Going Anywhere" flows naturally out of what precedes it. Like a series of epigrams, the music has a masterly brevity: when the information runs out, so does the song. The singing is quiet but drives the arrangements. It's the work of someone who has learned what she's good at.

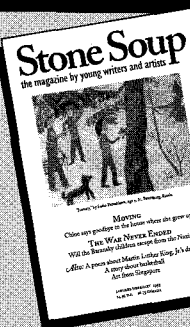
In July, I saw Keren Ann perform with a pianist, a guitarist, a violinist, and a trumpeter at Joe's Pub. She wore blue-jeans and a short-sleeved blue blouse covered in small white dots. Her bangs ended precisely above her eyes, and she smiled often, though she seemed unconcerned about whether anyone liked her. Before singing the album's title song, she announced, "This is not a love song. None of these are love songs."

"Not Going Anywhere" starts, like a hundred other songs, with a series of chords plucked in arpeggio. Keren Ann's guitar sounds clear and deep as her small, pitch-perfect voice enters: "This is why I always wonder / I'm a



Lapidary and pitch-perfect: The Paris-based singer-songwriter Keren Ann. Photograph by Sofia Sanchez and Mauro Mongiello.

THE LITERARY MAGAZINE



BY CHILDREN

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pond full of regrets / I always try to not remember rather than forget." It doesn't read well on the page, but Keren Ann's delivery means that it doesn't have to. She holds the dynamic steady, letting her voice and guitar resonate in the empty space until the chorus skips deliberately up the scale: "Tide will rise and fall along the bay / and I'm not going anywhere / I'm not going anywhere. / People come and go and walk away / but I'm not going anywhere / I'm not going anywhere." Her lack of affect increases the impact of the words. The listener's temperament will dictate whether the song is a guarantee of loyalty or a statement of resignation. Just as she said, it's not a love song. But it works as one.

Throughout "Not Going Anywhere," Keren Ann makes ready-mades new by delivering them without irony and paying special attention to setting. "Spanish Song Bird" is a depressive's cry—"Life is an endless parade / it's no sweet lemonade / only an empty bottle left in the shade"—turned into a slow soft-shoe. A ukulele, the least depressing instrument known to man, shuffles along as Keren Ann wishes happiness goodbye, happily. "By the Cathedral" is typical of a Keren Ann song: an unhurried melody gets itself out into the world. The chord changes are interesting but not distracting. The images are accessible—"I've seen water / by the cathedral / under the maple"—but the meaning is open-ended. There's room for us and our own Aprils and raincoats and doubts. It is clear-eyed, linear music that tricks you into thinking it's woozy.

If "Not Going Anywhere" is the perfect day, "Nolita" is that day remembered at night from far away, details distended by wine and selective memory. Keren Ann sings nearly half of "Nolita" in French: it is New York remembered by looking out a window in Montmartre. Keren Ann's ability to filter place through song may be a learned life skill. She spent her early childhood in Caesarea, Israel, and Steenwijk, Holland, eventually moving to Paris when she was eleven, already a committed Joni Mitchell fan. Her mother, Gerda Philipsen Zeidel, was born in the Netherlands to an Indonesian mother and a Dutch father, and worked in theatre before start-

ing a family. Keren Ann's father, Dan Zeidel, was born in Israel to Russian immigrants and was a sculptor before becoming a businessman.

"We are not supposed to talk about his sculpture now," Keren Ann said.

"Not Going Anywhere" sounds like one guitar presiding over one band playing in one room; "Nolita" wanders with different friends through various states of consciousness. The shift in focus may have been as much practical as aesthetic; in the summer of 2004, Keren Ann hurt her hand and was unable to play guitar for two months. The album begins with a bass guitar drowning out the acoustic guitar, as small electronic noises crowd the frame. This production style may be a work-around, but it is also an efficient suggestion of New York itself drowning out Paris.

The gorgeous sense of drift and dislocation on "Nolita" is not some kind of production mask. Keren Ann's style has become even more lapidary, and "Chelsea Burns" is a good example. The song doesn't just sound like the Velvet Underground—it sounds like what New York sounds like if you've grown up listening to the Velvet Underground. (Or what a New York loft might look like if re-created in the Ninth Arrondissement by someone who misses New York.) The electric guitar moves as if it's 3 A.M., thick-limbed but wired. "I was running out of trouble / you were running out of fame / Streets smelled like the desert / as they were putting out the flames." There's a lot of reverb on the voice, and Keren Ann isn't singing as clearly as she normally does. Maybe she is recalling one of those memories that won't really hold up in the morning. To distract us, two violins saw away, suggesting that it all took place in a bar slightly more Irish than French. The song does not quite remember. It was in New York, though. That we know. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER
From the Croton-on-Hudson (N.Y.) Gazette.

At about 2 p.m. a resident of the Orchard Road apartments called police, saying she was concerned there was something wrong with her son because she couldn't wake him up in bed. Upon arrival, the son told police there was nothing wrong; he had heard his mother attempting to wake him but simply chose not to respond.

PLAYING YOUR HUNCHES

"Pacific Overtures" and "Doubt."

BY JOHN LAHR

In the canon of Stephen Sondheim—Hal Prince musicals, "Pacific Overtures" (produced in 1976 and now revived by the Roundabout Theatre at Studio 54) falls between the conventional romantic elegance of "A Little Night Music" (1973) and the macabre cynicism of their masterpiece "Sweeney Todd" (1979). "Pacific Overtures," which found little favor with the public, and which lost to "A Chorus Line" as that year's best musical, was the stalking horse for the team's rebellion against the musical's hidebound rituals. "Pacific Overtures" shouldered the burden of history, not just happiness. Leap-frogging from 1853 to the present, it told the story of Commodore Perry's gunboat diplomacy with Japan, and the American attempt to force a closed, feudal "floating kingdom" to open trading negotiations with the West. "Pacific Overtures" itself might be called a piece of showboat diplomacy. Here, just because they could, Sondheim and Prince—the big guns of the art form—tried to muscle the insular American musical away from its populist roots to their esoteric way of doing business. The challenge, according to Prince, was to "tell the story as though it were written by a Japanese playwright in the Kabuki style, with the Americans the traditional Kabuki villains." In this new kind of musical, concept replaced character, gravity replaced frivolity, irony replaced affirmation. In merging the musical idioms of East and West, for instance, "Pacific Overtures" was meant to become what it dramatized: an act of cultural violation.

"One must accommodate the times / As one lives them," the samurai-turned-governor Kayama (Michael K. Lee) sings in "A Bowler Hat" as he transforms before our eyes from warrior to capitalist gent. Sondheim's musicals, over the decades, have also adjusted to a spiritual shift in society. In the first part of his career, Sondheim wrote impeccable lyrics to "West Side Story" (1957) and to "Gypsy" (1959), which gave postwar American

optimism its last and most sensational expression. After Vietnam, the musical could no longer hymn with conviction its faith in the nation's goodness. "How is it you sing anything? / How is it you sing?" someone asks in "Sweeney Todd"; the question was, and remains, crucial to the future of the musical.

With "Company" (1970)—a plotless

its pleasure. "Pacific Overtures" is a case in point. When Commodore Perry finally appears, he is depicted from the Japanese point of view as a masked and monstrous colossus whose mad eyes beam white light at us. Instead of making a show of blessing—the musical's traditional role—"Pacific Overtures" makes a spectacle of the Republic's barbarity.

By imposing a quasi-Brechtian style—a Reciter (B. D. Wong) mediates the story and Japanese history—"Pacific Overtures" insists on detachment. At a stroke, the hot world of the musical becomes cool; nonetheless, the technical prowess of the individual creative contributions is self-evident. John Weidman's book is crisp, clear, and ambitious. Amon Miyamoto's direction is also elegant; he uses



"Pacific Overtures" revolution: to replace the glad with the glib.

musical about blighted relationships—Sondheim emerged as both lyricist and composer; he'd struck the mother lode of disillusion, which spoke to the culture's confusions. He became Broadway's laureate of disenchantment. In the blasted joys and jubilant despairs of his subsequent shows, he sounded the new note of a winded civilization, uncertain even of

Junko Koshino's subtle costumes to make minimal but powerful stage pictures. The production's sense of visual and emotional reserve brings with it a certain aridity: one longs for a touch of American vulgarity. This seems to be true even of Sondheim, whose songs take flight when they're finally allowed to express the jazzy Western momentum. In its ingenious

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verbal shorthand, "Please Hello!"—a song about West meeting East—best shows off Sondheim's theatrical panache. The visiting foreign admirals wrap the Shogun's first counsellor in persiflage and flags, until he is literally a pinwheel of national promises. The French Admiral, swaggering in leather pants, is particularly piquant: "A détente, a détente / Is ze only thing we wish! / Same as zem, except additional / Ze rights to fish."

"Pacific Overtures" certainly raises the intellectual stakes: the musical is smarter, but is it better? I'm not convinced. In the show's elegant design, pattern triumphs over penetration. The characters are notional; they are not felt presences. Holiday has been replaced by hypothesis in song. Kayama and Manjiro (Paolo Montalban), a fisherman sentenced to death as a foreigner, succeed at first in repelling the Americans from Japanese shores and are both elevated for their bravery. In the course of the musical, however, Kayama becomes Westernized and Manjiro radicalized. In an eerie echo of America's most recent occupation, Manjiro ends up shouting "Expel the barbarians!" at his former friend, who personifies their imperialism. They duel; Kayama dies. In the name of progress, by the Emperor's command, the samurai are forced to disarm, take up "useful trades," and shed their ceremonial dress. The rush of Western capitalism—a hundred and fifty years of it—is accomplished with the finale, "Next," one of those pieces of moralizing bombast that pass for significance among Sondheim's devotees: "Streams are flying / Use the motion— / Next! / Streams are drying— / Mix a potion. / Streams are dying / Try the ocean. / Brilliant notion— / Next!" Over this sweep of history, amid a spectacle of devastation (a beam falls portentously across the stage), facts about Japan's Americanization—Sony, Toyota, Hideki Matsui (for God's sake!)—are intoned. The glad, it seems, has been jettisoned for the glib. The Reciter looks out at modern Japan and at us, saying, "There was a time when foreigners were not welcome here. But that was long ago." On that note of sardonic bluster, the curtain falls. Are we supposed to pine for the good old ferocious feudal days of the shogun? To be lectured on the corruption of capitalism from the Broadway stage is rather like being taught the virtues of chastity by a whore. On the way out of the theatre, I noticed

that for twenty-three dollars you could buy a "Pacific Overtures" T-shirt in English or Japanese. It's appropriate, I think, for a musical that wants to have it both ways.

In John Patrick Shanley's "Doubt" (at the Manhattan Theatre Club), there are no two ways of doing things in the Bronx Catholic high school that the principal, Sister Aloysius (Cherry Jones), rules with her iron will and her sharp tongue. To her, "innocence is a form of laziness"; she preaches the gospel of skepticism as an aid to eternal vigilance. "The heart is warm, but your wits must be cold," she tells the novice teacher Sister James (Heather Goldenhersh). "Liars should be frightened to lie to you." Goldenhersh, who is new to me, manages a fetching and remarkable sweetness that plays powerfully against Jones's brilliant spikiness. Jones turns Sister Aloysius into a fortress of faith and fulmination. Her fierce biases and her rigor are the catalyst of Shanley's ripsnorting melodrama, which focusses on whether or not the popular Father Flynn (the charismatic Brian F. O'Byrne) has abused a young black student. The play works as a superbly told yarn and also as a parable. Any relation to a certain world leader who is never in doubt and is impelled to act on his suspicions as an article of faith is purely intentional.

Shanley never tips his hand. He deftly raises the stakes until the audience dares not breathe for fear of missing a plot point. By letting the audience know both that Father Flynn has changed schools three times in five years and that the black student is an avowed homosexual, he plays to our prejudices and, at the same time, makes Sister Aloysius's hunch all the more Draconian. Her gut instinct says he should go. Father Flynn claims to have done nothing wrong; nonetheless, he faces the loss of not just his job but his reputation. Did he molest the child? Is the accusation the projection of a fanatic believer? The play mischievously makes you second-guess yourself. Shanley works every angle of the argument as he builds up to the final face-off between principal and priest. Jones and O'Byrne are two of New York's finest actors; to watch them duke it out in well-written roles that crackle with intelligence and rhythm is almost a sports thrill. All the intensity is tidy and only the immortal soul is punished, so look for "Doubt" soon on Broadway. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

PARTNERS

"Closer" and "House of Flying Daggers."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The new Mike Nichols film, "Closer," starts with a man falling in love with Natalie Portman. From this we may assume that the movie is concerned with universal, a-priori truths, although there is a scene in a lap-dancing club when the a-posteriori version comes in handy. The man is Dan (Jude Law), a writer of obituaries for a London newspaper,

ginnings and ends. What we get, instead, is knots of desire, clumped together and hard to tease apart. The first tangle comes when Dan sits for a photographer, Anna (Julia Roberts). They exchange a kiss. From here, Nichols and his screenwriter, Patrick Marber—who has adapted his own play, of the same name—make it their business to erode



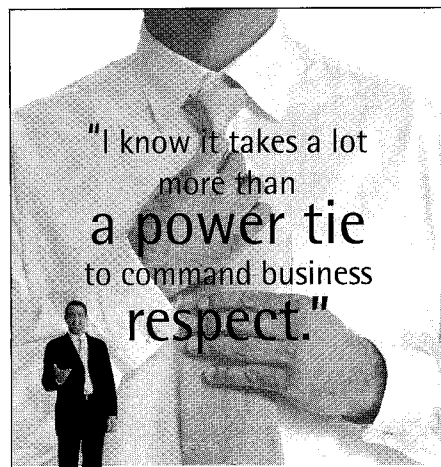
Natalie Portman and Clive Owen in Mike Nichols's movie.

who wears a hangdog suit as if in half-mourning for his subjects. Portman plays a slip of a thing named Alice, a stripper by profession, just in from New York. If she knew how much soul, as opposed to body, she would be forced to bare in the course of her stay, she might have turned around and flown home.

The next thing we know, the two of them are sharing a full life and a cramped apartment. In fact, we have bounced ahead in time, but at no point in "Closer," the plot of which unrolls over four years or more, does a title flash up saying "One year on" or "Two weeks later." The plan, presumably, is not to confuse but to cram—to yank the film away from the romantic decorum that views love as a narrative, with clean be-

the sentimental status quo. If you want caring and sharing, forget it. People share here, but they share betrayals and bodily fluids as if they were viral strains. Anna meets a doctor named Larry (Clive Owen) in the blue dusk of an aquarium—an ominous site, for anyone who remembers Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth plotting in front of a fishtank in "The Lady from Shanghai." Anna marries Larry, but that kiss with Dan was the start of something bad. Larry himself is no angel, and his devilry is destined to leave its mark; once he encounters Alice at a show of Anna's photographs, another stage is set.

"Closer" began in the theatre, hitting a nerve in more than thirty languages around the world. Language is the bat-



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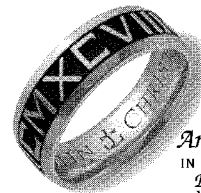
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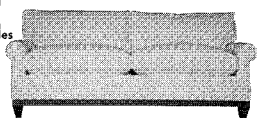
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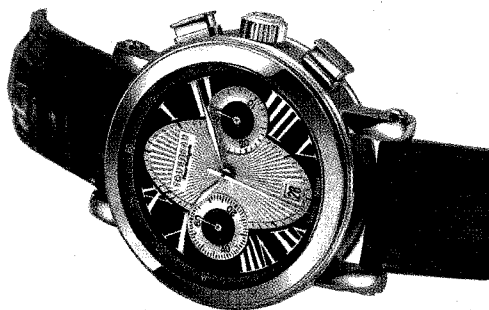


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tlefield, or the minefield, here—our four-some talk of almost nothing but sex, yet there is no sex, unless you count Alice's bendy, no-touching display in a professional club—and I would be interested to learn how Anna's tirade, in which she compares the seminal flavors of our two heroes ("the same as yours, but sweeter"), went down in Serbo-Croatian or Mandarin. Here, I guess, there will be a titillated shudder as Julia Roberts delivers the line: all that sour dirt in the mouth of America's sweetheart! But the shock will fade, and what really matters is how wretched Roberts seems in the portrayal of a wretched being. Roberts is at her loveliest when she is funny, she is at her funniest when she is happy, and she is never at her happiest in this film. Jude Law, likewise, looks frayed by the wear and tear; you can believe him and Roberts when they've had enough, but not, crucially, in the earlier scenes, when they should be engulfing each other and ravenous for more.

All of which leaves Natalie Portman and Clive Owen to carry the show. Portman is becoming hard to cast: her beauty is by now so extreme that its sole purpose is the feeding of obsession. (George Lucas loads her with silly costumes and puddles of makeup, as if to wish the beauty away, to stop it from throwing his sexless galaxy out of whack.) Owen alone, in "Closer," rises to the challenge, and his scene with Alice in the club is the core of the picture—she in frills and pink wig, he meaty, stubbled, and stripped of cant. Larry scorns his wife when she tags him with "middle-class guilt," and rightly so; he is a working-class boy made good, and emotionally unafraid—that is why he hits so hard on Alice, whose tears are as brisk as his rages. Toward the end, a snuffing Dan confronts Larry in his office, and I was embarrassed to see how comprehensively Owen, resplendent in tie and pin-stripes, wipes the floor with Law, whose voice goes high and husky under the assault. Larry's gibes are guided like missiles, and the meanest of them is unanswerable: "You writer."

Given this firepower, why does "Closer" the movie leave fewer scorchmarks than "Closer" the play? I saw it in the theatre, with Clive Owen in the part of Dan (small wonder that his Larry is so triumphant: he knows Dan's

soft spots all too well), and the impression was one of terrible momentum—four characters in search of a pileup. The film feels elegant by comparison, more circular than headlong. At first, the director of photography, Stephen Goldblatt, reduces London to its harsh constituent grays—steel, stone, cloud—but before long we are wafting into exhibition spaces and airy lofts that could be anywhere. My favorite Nichols film is still "Carnal Knowledge," whose Jules Feiffer script was as venomous as Marber's. The Nichols of 1971, however, was bold and speedy, keeping pace with Jack Nicholson's contempt, whereas the more civilized Nichols of 2004 seems a beat behind the lines, waiting for peace or charity to break out. They never do. As for the funniest sequence, when Dan visits an anonymous sex-chat Web site and, pretending to be a woman ("Blonde. Epic tits"), cyber-seduces a gullible Larry, all we get is meek, over-the-shoulder shots of their screens, whereas onstage the entire backdrop was illuminated, until our field of vision was replete with their electronic filth. It was just like being at the movies.

Two cops are hanging out at the precinct, talking about gangs. The first cop throws a rumor into the air. "One of the new showgirls at the Peony Pavilion is a member of Flying Daggers," he says. "O.K., I'll check it out," says the other. Where, and when, is this conversation taking place? Could it be late Chandler? Chinatown, perhaps, in the dregs of the nineteen-thirties? Close, but not quite. The answer is not Chinatown but China, in 859 A.D. At a time when Western civilization couldn't decide whether mud was a foodstuff, China was only one step short of the buddy flick.

The new picture from Zhang Yimou, "House of Flying Daggers," is packed with notable advances. I was much taken with an archer who fires four arrows in such swift succession that they reach their targets simultaneously. Other tools of aggression include the daggers of the title and, most menacing of all, a pair of long sleeves in candy-pink silk. These are sported by Mei (Ziyi Zhang), the showgirl who has piqued the interest of our policemen, Leo (Andy Lau) and Jin (Takeshi Kaneshiro). Considering that Mei is blind, and that she appears to be

constructed from rose petals and porcelain, her extensive homicidal tendencies come as something of a surprise.

The Flying Daggers are a network of guerrillas, agitating darkly against a corrupt government, and Mei is the daughter of their late leader. Jin, posing as a supporter of the underground, and assuming the slightly unwise nom de guerre of Wind, springs Mei from jail and blows along with her through a series of rural slugfests. The tension that thrums through this movie, however, is entirely bound up with physical threat, whereas its political equivalent is nil. This marks an extraordinary shift for Zhang Yimou, who, in his greener days, was a thorn for the Chinese authorities. "House of Flying Daggers," however, following eagerly on this summer's "Hero," suggests an artist who has not so much risen above the scrutiny of social oppression as drifted away from it. He has somehow grown younger and colder—a brilliant boy again, excited by new toys.

The toys allow him to follow the in-flight progress of blades and darts, and to reinforce his actors' lofted scorn for the operations of gravity. People climb the air as though it were a flight of stairs, or monkey around in the feathery tops of bamboos. In short, Zhang could not shoot an unbeautiful scene if he tried.

The facility that flowered in his earliest and best films, such as "Red Sorghum," will never desert him, and nobody since the Michael Powell of "The Red Shoes" has striven so hard to assure us that the eye can be struck by color as suddenly, and as staggeringly, as a body taking a punch. On the other hand, the deep-dyed stillness in which Zhang once specialized has been replaced by faster cuts, and the emotional wrangling, too, has been raised a couple of notches. Viewers wishing to keep track of who used to love Mei, who currently loves Mei, and who is slated to fall in love with Mei before the next martial-arts demonstration should bring a pencil and a sheet of graph paper. When a plot is as contorted as this, no single twist seems to wield more force than any other, and you soon slump back and submit to the wash and surge of the action. This may be where kinetic cinema, Chinese or otherwise, is heading—a form in which hand-to-hand combat does the work that would once have been the province of a heart-to-heart. Hence the final fight in "House of Flying Daggers": two men meet in a meadow on a nice sunny day and are still hard at it when the winter blizzards kick in. You feel wiped and blinded by such ravishment, yet a voice within you asks: Come on, guys, can't you just stop for the holidays? ♦

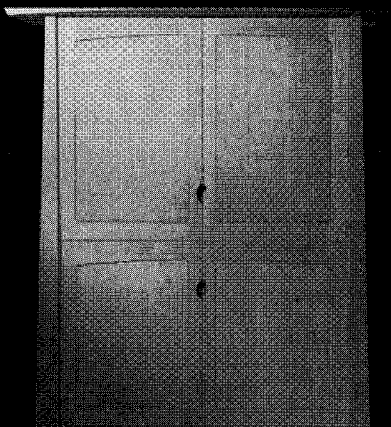
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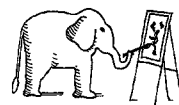
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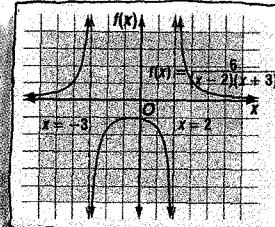
Example 2 Graph $f(x) = \frac{6}{(x-2)(x+3)}$.

The **vertical asymptotes** are the lines whose equations are $x = 2$ and $x = -3$. Use a calculator to generate a table of values for $f(x)$. Be sure to generate values near both sides of the asymptotes. Let's look at $x = 10$.

Enter: 6 $\div$ ($\div$) 10 $\div$ ($\div$) 2 $\div$ ($\div$) 3 $\div$ 10
 $\div$ 3 $\div$ 10 = 0.057692307

The same pattern of keystrokes can be used to find other values of $f(x)$ that approach those of the horizontal asymptote.

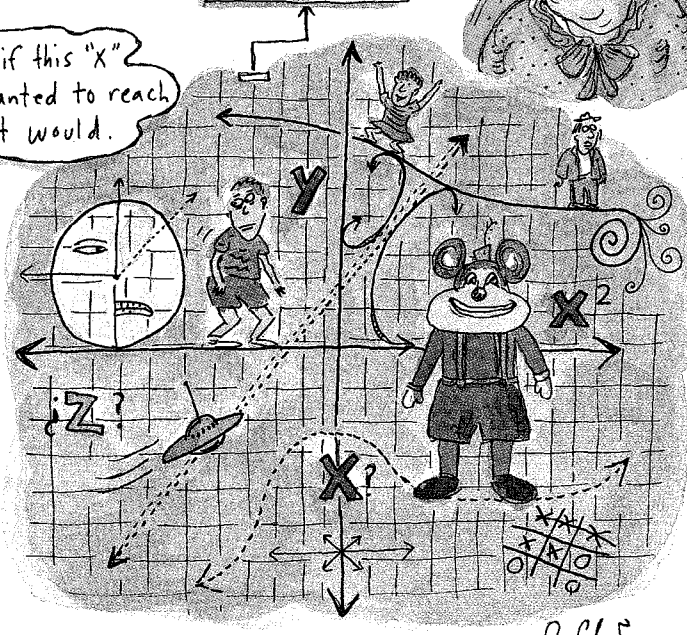
$f(10) = 0.057692307$
 $f(100) = 0.000594412$
 $f(1000) = 0.000005994$
 $f(-10) = 0.071428571$
 $f(-100) = 0.000606428$
 $f(-1000) = 0.000006006$



As $|x|$ increases, it appears that the value of the function approaches, but never quite reaches, 0. An equation of the horizontal asymptote is $f(x) = 0$. Plot points on either side of each asymptote. Then sketch the graph.

Perhaps if this "x" really wanted to reach zero, it would.

Well, does it or doesn't it? Make up your mind.



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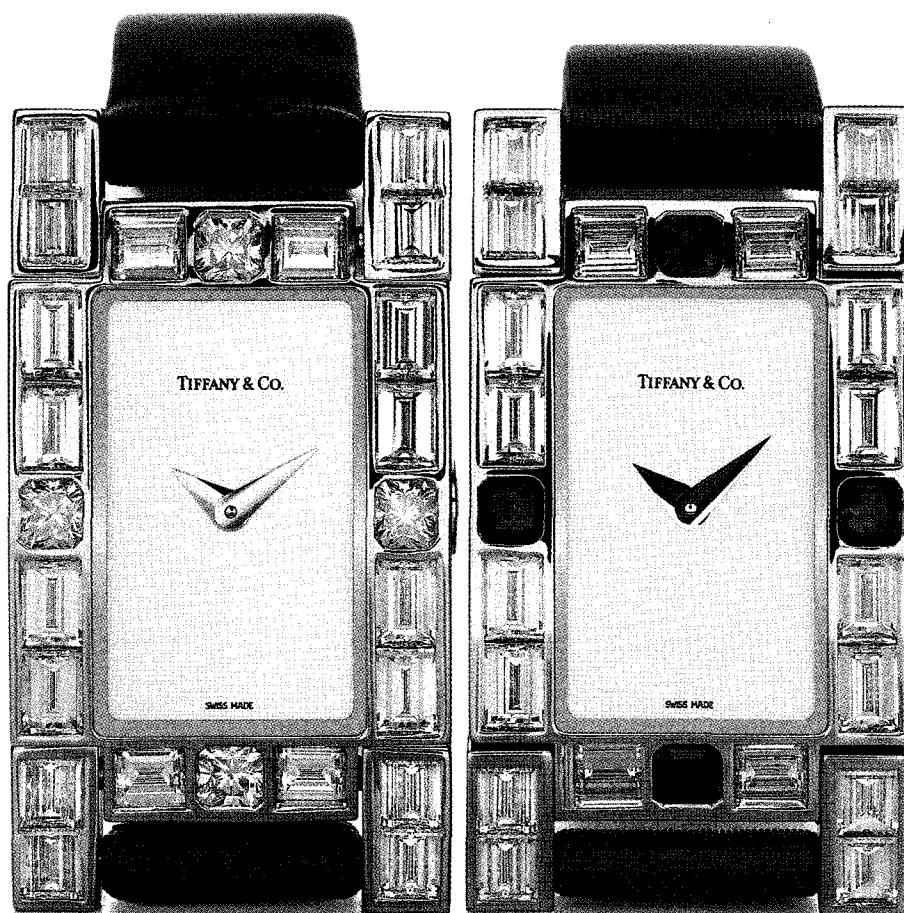
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